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SC bans mining near wildlife zones

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Ex-MD of Jaypee Infratech held in ₹14,599 crore fraud

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Website: salarnews.in | www.magzter.com | 14 NOVEMBER 2025 | FRIDAY | BENGALURU | 22 JUMADA I, 1447 AH | Vol 4 | Issue No 310 | Pages: 8

SC bins TN's plea against Mekedatu dam

SC says plea was 'premature'; DKS calls verdict a victory

NEW DELHI, 13 NOV

The Supreme Court on Thursday rejected a plea by the Tamil Nadu government against construction of the Mekedatu Balancing Reservoir Project across the Cauvery river by Karnataka, calling it "premature".

A bench comprising Chief Justice of India BR Gavai, Justices K Vinod Chandran and Justice NV Anjaria said the plan would be approved only after considering the objections of the State as well as the opinion of the expert bodies, Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC) and the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA).

"At this stage, what is being done by the order passed by the CWC is only permitting the preparation of the DPR (Detailed Project Report), that too after taking into consideration the objections of the State of Tamil Nadu, the experts of the CWMA and CWRC," the bench said. "The CWC had further directed that the prior approval of the CWMA and CWRC would be a prerequisite for the consideration of the DPR. In that view of the matter, we find the present application is at a premature stage."

The apex court noted that in August 2023, the bench had asked the CWMA to assess the situation saying that the court does not possess the expertise. "We reiterate... that we don't possess expertise," the bench said.

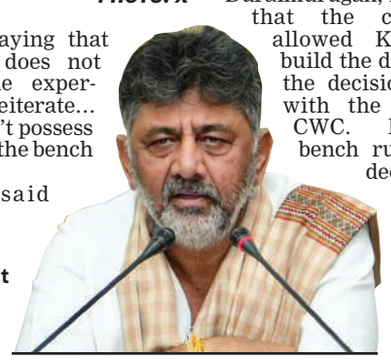
It said Karnataka is bound to release the water in pursuance of the directions of the court. "If Karnataka fails to comply... it faces the risk of committing contempt of the court."

The balancing reservoir at the Karnataka-Tamil Nadu border has been proposed at Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar's home town Kanakapura in Bengaluru South district (erstwhile Ramanagara district).

Shivakumar hailed the verdict. "Justice has flown from the seat of justice."

Tamil Nadu Water Minister Duraimurugan, however, said that the court hasn't allowed Karnataka to build the damn, but that the decision now rests with the CWMA and CWC. He said the bench ruled that "no decision can be taken without hearing the views of the Tamil Nadu government." —*PTI*

Karnataka wants to build a dam at Mekedatu on the Cauvery river, near DyCM DK Shivakumar's hometown of Kanakapura **PHOTO: X**



> **I request Tamil Nadu to accept it with humility. Let us work together. They don't have any other option. They have to give us justice**
>
> -DK Shivakumar, Deputy Chief Minister

Ban luxury cars: SC bats for EVs

The Supreme Court on Thursday urged the Centre to update its 2020 electric vehicles (EV) policy to reflect technological and infrastructural changes over the past five years and to begin implementation with a metropolitan pilot project. It also to review the National Electric Mobility Mission Plan (NEMMP) 2020, which aims to boost EV adoption.

A Bench of Justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi asked Attorney General R Venkataramani "Just think of imposing a ban on the very high-end vehicles first of all. So it will not affect the common man. Because very small part of the Indian population can afford that," Justices Kant said. —*Agencies*

Pollution: SC hearings go virtual

Supreme Court judge Justice PS Narasimha on Thursday urged lawyers to attend hearings virtually amid Delhi-NCR's hazardous air quality.

Sitting with Justice Atul S Chandurkar, he made the remark while hearing case mentions.

Noting several advocates wearing masks, he cautioned that masks may not offer sufficient protection, warning, "Toxic air can cause permanent damage." The national capital has faced toxic air since early November, with air quality remaining 'severe'. Delhi's AQI stood at 428 on Tuesday and and Wednesday. —*PTI*

Karnataka HC allows RSS route march in Chittapur

BENGALURU, 13 NOV

The Karnataka High Court on Thursday allowed the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) to hold a route march in Chittapur on November 16 with 300 participants and a 50-member band. Justice M G S Kamal noted that the local Tahsildar had already granted permission with conditions. The court accepted the petitioner's plea to raise the band size but retained the participant cap at 300, rejecting a request to increase it to 600. Authorities had earlier denied permission citing possible law and order issues, prompting the RSS to approach the court. The petition was accordingly disposed of. —*PTI*

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HC refuses to quash POCSO case against BSY

BENGALURU, 13 NOV

The Karnataka High Court on Thursday refused to quash a POCSO case against former chief minister BS Yediyurappa, upholding the trial court's order taking cognizance of the alleged offence. Justice MI Arun directed that Yediyurappa's personal appearance not be insisted upon unless necessary and allowed him to seek discharge from the trial court. The case stems from a complaint alleging he sexually assaulted a 17-year-old girl at his Bengaluru residence in February 2024. CID filed the chargesheet after investigation. Yediyurappa denied the charges, calling them politically motivated. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 2

Bihar anxiously awaits election verdict today

PATNA, 13 NOV

- Exit polls have been nearly unanimous in predicting a clean sweep for the NDA, but INDIA bloc's CM candidate Tejashwi Yadav has said his alliance would triumph

People of Bihar wait with bated breath for Friday's counting of votes polled in the recent Assembly elections, which will decide whether JD(U) supremo Nitish Kumar, the state's longest-serving Chief Minister, will get a record fifth term or whether a change in government will be witnessed.

Bihar registered a historic voter turnout of 67.13 per cent in the elections to the 243-member assembly on 6 and 11 November.

Counting of votes will begin at 8am in 46 counting centres across 38 districts in the state.

Exit polls have been nearly unanimous in predicting a clean sweep for the NDA.

Tejashwi Yadav, INDIA block's chief ministerial candidate, claimed Mahagathbandhan would form the government with a thumping majority.

The NDA in Bihar comprises five parties, though JD(U) and BJP fielded candidates in 101 constituencies each. The INDIA bloc includes RJD, Congress, CPI(ML) Liberation, other Left parties, and Vikasheel Insaan Party (VIP).

Other wild cards are JJD's Tej Pratap Jan Suraaj's Prashant Kishor. —*PTI*

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Delhi toll 13; 2 docs detained, 3rd car found

NEW DELHI, 13 NOV

The death toll in the blast near Red Fort early this week rose to 13 after another injured person succumbed to his injuries at the LNJP Hospital on Thursday, an official said. The deceased was Bilal, while several others remain under treatment.

Meanwhile, another car - Maruti Brezza - was found parked in Faridabad's Al Falah University, police said. Authorities have also revoked the university's membership.

A severed hand was found on the roof of a shop near the Red Fort blast site. The hand, found behind the Jain Temple, has not been identified.

Police conducting a raid in the Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday. At least 10 people were detained across the valley in 200 raids. Several of the 'white-collar terrorists' were from the UT **PHOTO: PTI**

TWO MORE DETAINED

The Uttar Pradesh Anti-Terrorism Squad detained two more doctors. The first is Dr Mohammad Arif, 32, a first-year DM (Cardiology) student at the state-run Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi Memorial (GSVM) Medical College. The other is Dr Farooq, assistant professor in the Obstetrics Department at GS Medical College. Both are natives of Jammu and Kashmir.

SUSPECTS POOLED RS 26 LAKH FOR MATERIALS

The doctors arrested had raised more than Rs 26 lakh to procure materials used in the deadly blast, an official said.

The four suspects, Dr Muzammil Ganaie, Dr Adeel Ahmad Rather, Dr Shaheen Sayeed and Dr Umar Nabi, part of the "white-collar terror module" had pooled in the cash. Sources said that Umar and Muzammil had a disagreement in the days leading up to the explosion. Police said that the accused were in constant contact through a Swiss app and were planning an attack on four cities. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

Cops move Interpol for notice on doc

Srinagar, 13 Nov

Jammu and Kashmir police has approached Interpol to issue a Red Corner Notice against Qazigund-based Dr Muzaffar in connection with the interstate 'white collar' terror module busted, officials said. Muzaffar is the brother of Dr Adeel who was amongst the eight-people arrested. Muzaffar's name surfaced during interrogation. Officials said that he was part of the doctors' team that visited Turkey in 2021. Officials say the accused Umar Nabi were radicalised during the trip. —*PTI*

State assembly starts 8 Dec, to discuss GBGB

BENGALURU, 13 NOV

The Karnataka cabinet on Thursday decided to present the Greater Bengaluru Governance (Second Amendment) Bill, 2025 (GBGB) in the upcoming legislative session on 8 December. The amendment seeks to provide greater clarity on the appointment of members of Parliament and legislators as members of the Authority, Law Minister HK Patil said. The winter session will go on for 10 days in Belagavi. Patil said three cabinet sub-committees, which had not submitted their report for more than six months, were directed to do so at the earliest. One committee pertains to the Justice John Michael D'Cunha's report on the procurement of medicines and medical equipment during Covid-19, the Minister said. Second committee was formed to review the financial condition of the universities in Karnataka while the third committee was tasked with reviewing the developments on the Bengaluru-Mysuru Infrastructure Corridor and initiating appropriate steps to be taken in future. The first and second committees are headed by the Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar while the third is by the Home Minister. —*PTI*

Space, IT policies get Cabinet nod

BENGALURU, 13 NOV

The Karnataka Cabinet on Thursday approved the Karnataka Space Technology Policy 2025-30, Information Technology Policy and Local Economic Accelerator Programme (LEAP), Karnataka Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HK Patil told reporters.

The space tech policy will have five strategic pillars — skill development, investment, infrastructure creation, innovation, and adoption and awareness.

The Information Technology Policy has a budget of Rs 445.5 crore over five years.

It aims to promote artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, quantum computing, green-IT, and cybersecurity.

Patil said the policy aims to boost growth in emerging cities such as Mysuru, Mangaluru, Hubballi-Dharwad, Belagavi, Tumakuru, Kalaburagi and Shivamogga.

Under the Local Economic Accelerator Programme (LEAP), a Centre of Excellence (CoE) in Defence Technology and Industry will be established at Rs 18 crore over five years.

Rs 200 crore has been provided for LEAP, which aims to generate five lakh jobs. Innovation ecosystems will be developed in Mysuru, Mangaluru, Udupi-Manipal, Hubballi-Dharwad, Belagavi and Kalaburagi.

A fund of Rs 100 crore for DeepTech development and a Fund of Funds of Rs 300 crore will be established.

Six CoEs will be set up outside Bengaluru. —*PTI*

IN BAGALKOT

20 tractors torched as farmers protest

BAGALKOT/ BELAGAVI 13 NOV

The ongoing agitation by sugarcane farmers in Mudhol, Bagalkot, took a violent turn on Thursday as at least 20 tractors loaded with sugarcane were set on fire. Farmers have been demanding a minimum support price of Rs 3,500 per tonne of sugarcane.

The incident occurred at the Sameerawade Godavari Sugar Factory premises, where angry farmers stormed the compound against the factory management. They alleged

that the factory failed to clear pending dues. Witnesses said the situation spiralled out of control as some farmers torched tractors parked in the factory premises.

District authorities have imposed Section 164 prohibitory orders in Jamkhandi, Rabkavi-Banahatti, and Mudhol taluks.

Last week, the State government fixed the procurement price of sugarcane at Rs 3,300 per tonne. While many farmers withdrew their protest, those in Bagalkot and Haveri continued.

Meanwhile, six people were arrested for pelting stones during a protest near Hattargi toll plaza on the Pune-Bengaluru National Highway on 7 November where 12 cops were injured. —*Salar News*

>>>More on Page 3

Belagavi farmer dies by suicide over loan repayment

BELAGAVI, 13 NOV

A 78-year-old farmer from Kadoli village in Belagavi district allegedly died by suicide after facing relentless pressure from a finance company over loan repayment.

The deceased has been identified as Sateri Honnappa Rutkute.

Rutkute had reportedly borrowed Rs 12 lakh from the Mannur Co-operative Finance Society. Family members said he had already repaid Rs 4 lakh, but the firm allegedly demanded an additional Rs 16 lakh, including principal and accumulated interest.

According to relatives, the finance company staff threatened to auction Rutkute's house and even publicly announced his default in the village, which left him deeply humiliated.

"He felt his honour was lost," a family member said, claiming this drove him to end his life. The grieving family has accused the finance firm's employees of abetment to suicide. A case has been registered at the Kakati Police Station. —*Salar News*

Help is available. Please call Tele Manas at 14416, SAHAI at 080-25497777 for support.

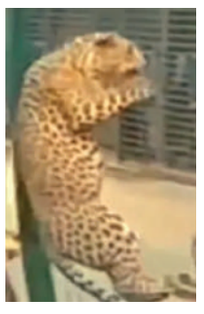
KRISHI MELA

Students take a photograph in front of the sunflower farm at GKVK campus, during the inaugural ceremony of Krishi Mela **PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD**

Leopard jumps on Bannerghatta safari bus, women injured

BENGALURU, 13 NOV

A woman was injured when a leopard clawed at her through the window of a safari bus at Bannerghatta National Park on Thursday, officials said.



The woman, identified as Vahita Banu, said to be in her 50s, was treated for minor injuries and later taken to a private hospital. She is reported to be stable.

The incident occurred during a leopard safari in the afternoon. A viral video shows the leopard jumping onto the safari bus and pawing through the window in an attempt to attack her. Officials said the vehicles are equipped with metal mesh on their windows and openings to block animal contact with visitors. However, the leopard's paw reportedly reached through a small gap in the mesh.

"The woman received scratches on her hand and was immediately given first aid. She is now out of danger," an official confirmed. —*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Linkin Park to perform in B'luru on 23 January

NEW DELHI, 13 NOV

Rock band Linkin Park has announced a standalone concert in the City on 23 January, 2026, complementing their much-anticipated India debut at Lollapalooza India 2026. The band, renowned for hits like 'In the End' and 'Numb', will headline Lollapalooza in Mumbai on 24 and 25 January. "This past year on the From Zero World Tour has been incredible," said band leader Mike Shinoda. "The warmth and excitement from fans was overwhelming, and we decided that one show just wasn't enough." The Bengaluru concert is part of their From Zero World Tour. Homegrown metal band Bloodywood will support the show. General ticket sales will commence on 15 November through the BookMyShow app. *—PTI*

Increase tobacco prices to support farmers: Yaduveer

MYSURU, 13 NOV

MP Yaduveer Krishnadutta Chamaraja Wadiyar on Thursday urged Tobacco Board officials to raise buying prices for tobacco to assist growers facing rising cultivation costs. Speaking at a meeting in Periyapatna, he stated, "The union government is ready to protect the interest of tobacco growers," highlighting the significant cultivation in Periyapatna, HD Kote, Hunsur, and Nanjangud taluks. Wadiyar emphasised the need for transparency in auctions and suggested managing production areas to prevent market fluctuations. He also called for an increase in loan limits for growers and urged officials to raise accidental death compensation from Rs 50,000 to Rs 1 lakh. Furthermore, he requested a CBI inquiry into a Rs 7 crore scandal involving the Tobacco Board to investigate allegations of fund misuse. *—Salar News*

CM to launch DKS's book 'Neerina Hejje' on 14 Nov

BENGALURU, 13 NOV

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is set to unveil 'Neerina Hejje' (Footprints of Water), a book by Deputy Chief Minister and Water Resource Minister DK Shivakumar, on 14 November. The publication explores the history, challenges, and opportunities surrounding the State's water resources, as stated by the Deputy CM's office. The launch event will take place at the Banquet Hall of Vidhana Soudha and will feature prominent guests including Ministers HK Patil, MB Patil, NS Boseraju, alongside Senior Advocate of the Supreme Court, Mohan V Kataraki, who will serve as chief guests at the gathering. *—PTI*

Couple arrested for assaulting police officers in Raichur

RAICHUR, 13 NOV

Two individuals, Ramappa and his wife Sakkubai, have been arrested by the Mudgal Police for allegedly assaulting officers in Mattur Tanda, Lingasugur taluk in the State. Officers ASI Venkataappa Nayak and PSI Venkatesh Madageri had arrived in the village to question Ramappa regarding a pending case. Reports indicate that the couple attacked ASI Venkataappa and, during the incident, Sakkubai snatched a mobile phone being used to record events, hiding it in her blouse. The situation escalated when she allegedly assaulted PSI Venkatesh and took the key to a police motorbike, concealing the vehicle in her home. Both police personnel were subsequently treated at Lingasugur Taluk Hospital, and a complaint was lodged at Mudgal Police Station, leading to the arrest of the couple. *—Salar News*

HC refuses to drop POCSO case against Yediyurappa

Judge allows exemption from routine court presence

BENGALURU, 13 NOV

The Karnataka High Court on Thursday refused to quash the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act case filed against former chief minister BS Yediyurappa.

Justice MI Arun upheld the trial court's 28 February order taking cognisance of the alleged offence and issuing summons to the senior BJP leader.

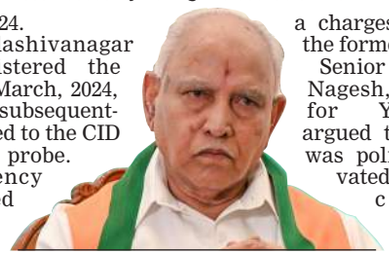
However, the court directed that Yediyurappa's personal appearance should not be insisted upon unless necessary during the course of the trial, adding that any exemption plea filed on his behalf should be entertained unless his presence is deemed essential.

The single-judge bench also clarified that Yediyurappa is free to seek discharge from the trial court.

According to the complaint lodged by the victim's mother, Yediyurappa allegedly sexually assaulted her 17-year-old daughter during a meeting at his residence in Bengaluru in February 2024.

The court directed that Yediyurappa's personal appearance should not be insisted upon unless necessary during the course of the trial *PHOTO: PTI*

The Sadashivanagar police registered the case on 14 March, 2024, which was subsequently transferred to the CID for further probe. The agency re-registered the FIR and later filed a chargesheet against the former CM.



Senior Advocate CV Nagesh, appearing for Yediyurappa, argued that the case was politically motivated and that the complaint lacked credibility.

He pointed out that the complainant and her daughter had met the Bengaluru Police Commissioner several times in February 2024 but did not mention any allegation until 14 March.

Nagesh further claimed that witnesses present at the time of the alleged incident had stated that nothing untoward occurred.

Opposing this, Special Public Prosecutor Professor Ravivarma Kumar maintained that the Special Court had duly considered the evidence, including the victim's statement, before taking cognisance.

Earlier, on 7 February, the High Court had set aside the trial court's first order of cognisance, observing that there was no proper application of mind, but had upheld the validity of the investigation and the final report.

Following this, the Special Court passed a fresh cognisance order on 28 February, which was later stayed by the High Court. *—PTI*

CENTENARY CELEBRATION

High Court allows RSS march in Chittapur on 16 Nov

KALABURAGI/ BENGALURU, 13 NOV

The Karnataka High Court has granted permission for the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) route march in Chittapur, which had earlier sparked major controversy and political tension. The court permitted the march on 16 November with 300 participants and a 50-member band, a reduction from the 800 members the RSS sought.

The march is part of the RSS centenary celebrations and had become a point of contention in the constituency of Minister Priyank Kharge.

Justice MGS Kamal recorded that the Tahsildar of Chittapur had already granted permission for the event scheduled on 16 November, subject to specific conditions.

Earlier, the District Commissioner had denied permission for the RSS march in Chittapur. At the same time, Dalit organisations sought to hold a rally on the same day, leading to a legal dispute. The matter eventually reached the Karnataka High Court's Kalaburagi Bench, which has now issued a key order permitting the RSS march with certain conditions.

While the RSS had sought permission to hold the route march from 3.30pm to 630pm on 16 November, the court shortened the duration, allowing it only from 3.30pm to 5.45pm. The issue erupted when authorities in Chittapur, Priyank's home constituency, denied permission for the RSS route march on 19 October, citing the possibility of disruption of peace and law and order.

The Chittapur Tahsildar, had then cited that the Bhim Army and other organisations have also informed that they too will rally on the same route on the same day. *—Salar News*

The protesters shouted slogans against the forest department for their failure to prevent wild animals from straying out of the forest, destroying their crops and properties and attacking people *PHOTO: SALAR*

Farmers protest in Mysuru over human-animal conflict

MYSURU, 13 NOV

Farmers protested in front of the Aranya Bhavan (the forest department headquarters) in Mysuru's Ashokapuram on Thursday, urging the forest officials to curb rising human-wild animal conflict in the district.

The protesters shouted slogans against the forest department for their failure to prevent wild animals from straying out of the forest, destroying their crops and properties and attacking people.

The farmers said that the construction of illegal resorts and increased safaris were disturbing wild animals in their habitat, making them stray out of the forest.

The demonstrators asked the forest department to destroy all illegal resorts constructed in ecologically sensitive zones such as Bandipur and Nagarahole.

Even though Chief Minister Siddaramaiah issued a directive to the foresters during the KDP meeting earlier this week and asked the foresters to focus on the issue, the department officials had not done anything, the demonstrators alleged. They threatened to intensify the protest if the foresters failed to curb man and wild animals conflict in the region. *—Salar News*

Stop sharing tiger AI clips: Forest Dept

The Forest Department issued a circular cautioning the public against spreading fake news and artificial intelligence (AI)-generated videos claiming presence of tigers near the Hediyala range limits of the Bandipur Tiger Reserve. In a press release issued by the Assistant Conservator of Forests (ACF), Hediyala sub-division, Bandipur Tiger Reserve, stated that no tiger movements have been recorded in the vicinity of Hediyala and the circulating videos all appeared to be AI generated. *—Salar News*

FOR SPIRITUAL LEGACY

K'taka wants 4 railway stations after saints

BENGALURU, 13 NOV

- Patil said the state has written to the Union Ministry of Home Affairs recommending new names for the stations, under Hubballi Division.

State Minister MB Patil has proposed renaming four railway stations in the State after revered saints to honour their cultural and spiritual legacy.

In a statement on Thursday, Patil said the state has written to the Union Ministry of Home Affairs recommending new names for the stations, all under the Hubballi Division of South Western Railway.

He suggested renaming Vijayapura Railway Station as Jnana Yogi Sri Siddeshwara Swamiji Railway Station, Belagavi Station as Sri Basava Mahaswamiji Railway Station, Bidar Station as Channabasava Pattadevaru Railway Station, and Sooragondanakoppa Station as Bhayagada Railway Station.

"The saints proposed for the renaming have made immense spiritual and social contributions to their respective regions," the minister said, adding that the move aligns with local cultural significance.

The State's Infrastructure Department has formally forwarded the proposal to the Centre for approval. Patil urged the Union government to expedite clearance and issue a gazette notification at the earliest.

The proposal, officials said, aims to reflect the State's rich heritage and the saints' enduring influence on community life across north and central districts. *—PTI*

Techie arrested for car crash injuring family in the City

BENGALURU, 13 NOV

A 23-year-old software engineer has been arrested for allegedly ramming his car into a two-wheeler, injuring a couple and their young son in a hit-and-run incident on 16 October in the City. Identified as Sukruth Gowda, a resident of Kodigehalli and employed at a private firm in Whitefield, the incident occurred near the Ramaiah Hospital bus stand on New BEL Road.

Ankita Patel, 31, was riding with her husband, Vineth A, 33, and their son when a red Tata Curve car, reportedly driven at high speed, collided with their two-wheeler from behind. The force of the impact threw all three from the vehicle, resulting in injuries to Ankita and Vineth.

They were swiftly taken to MS Ramaiah Hospital for treatment and subsequently discharged. After a complaint was filed on 28 October, police identified Gowda through CCTV footage and arrested him on 7 November. *—PTI*

KRISHI MELA

A visitor poses for a picture with life-size cutouts of farmers at the inaugural ceremony of the four-day Krishi Mela at GKVK campus, Yelahanka, in Bengaluru on Thursday *PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD*

FAKE CALL CENTRE BUSTED IN BELAGAVI, 33 ARRESTED

BELAGAVI, 13 NOV

A Belagavi-based call centre was busted for allegedly defrauding international victims and 33 people, including five women were arrested in this connection.

The operation followed a tip-off from the Internal Security Division (ISD), Bengaluru and another anonymous complaint about the suspicious centre. A police team raided Kumar Hall on Bauxite Road, where the centre was operating.

According to police, the call centre targeted American citizens using VoIP software such as X-Lite, IBM, and Sophos, along with Urban VPN to mask identities. The accused followed 11 scam scripts, spoke in American accents, and defrauded victims through impersonation and deceit.

37 laptops and an equal number of mobile phones were seized.

The accused hail from Assam, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and West Bengal, besides one person from Nepal.

The police are tracing the mastermind based in Gujarat and two others in West Bengal.

The case was initially registered under Sections 66C and 66D of the Information Technology Act and several relevant sections of the BNS. Section 42 of the Indian Telegraph Act and provisions relating to organised crime were also added. Authorities are coordinating with CID Bengaluru for the local probe. *—PTI*

'LACKS SCIENTIFIC PLANNING'

PC Mohan to move NGT over tunnel road

BENGALURU, 13 NOV

Bengaluru Central BJP MP PC Mohan said the State government's tunnel road project "lacks vision, scientific planning, and fiscal prudence."

Speaking at a press conference in the City on Thursday, he said that his team was gathering evidence to submit to the National Green Tribunal (NGT).

He said that proposed Hebbal-Silk Board tunnel route was chosen based on vacant government land availability, such as Palace Grounds, Defence areas, and Race Course, rather than actual traffic demand or urban mobility needs.

"Shockingly, the tunnel ends before the Silk Board junction, one of the most congested points in Bengaluru," he said.

Bengaluru Central BJP MP PC Mohan said the government's tunnel road project lacks vision, planning, and fiscal prudence *PHOTO: X @PCMohanMP*

He added that there was no independent scrutiny from institutions such as the IISc or IITs.

"The Detailed Project Report (DPR) has been reviewed only by State-appointed officials and the same private consultant who prepared it," he noted. He added that the DPR has ignored environmental and social implications of the project.

"Over 15km of the tunnel is to be constructed using cut-and-cover methods, which will involve deep excavation, tree loss, and severe traffic disruptions for years," he said. "The remaining section uses NATM tunnelling, which carries vibration risks for nearby structures," which is may affect groundwater.

The proposed tunnel runs parallel to the Namma Metro's Pink Line, duplicating public transport infrastructure rather than complementing it, he said. "This not only wastes taxpayer money but also disrupts planned Metro expansion."

He said that Tunnel Boring Machines needed for construction take two years to procure and progress at 3-3.5m daily, meaning that the project would take 8-10 years to complete. This would cause relentless traffic disruption he said.

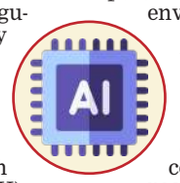
"Entry and exit points at Hebbal, Mekhri Circle, Lalbagh, and St John's were altered even after tendering, indicating poor coordination between engineers and consultants," he added. *—Salar News*

Centre launches AI platform for medics

MYSURU, 13 NOV

The Union government has launched an Artificial Intelligence (AI) platform to help healthcare professionals integrate AI models into clinical practice, a senior official said on Thursday.

Speaking at the inauguration of the two-day International Symposium on Frontiers of Research on Speech and Music (FRSM–2025) at the All India Institute of Speech and Hearing (AIISH), Sunita Verma, Scientist at the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), outlined ongoing initiatives to develop AI-driven technologies for public benefit.



She said the ministry aims to enhance healthcare access through affordable, indigenous, and sustainable technology, adding that cost-effectiveness remains a key challenge. The new initiative involves collaboration with start-ups and establishing translational hubs in major hospitals to support AI adoption in clinical environments.

Verma urged delegates to identify priority areas for technology development that could be scaled nationally. She said MeitY continues to strengthen research ecosystems through supportive policies and funding for both basic and applied research.

IIIT Dharwad Director Prof SRM Prasanna highlighted the scope of AI-based tools for effectively diagnosing and treating speech and hearing disorders. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

10 questioned over terror module in Kashmir

SRINAGAR, 13 NOV

Around 10 persons, including three government employees, have been picked up for questioning from Anantnag, Pulwama and Kulgam in Jammu and Kashmir in connection with the 'white collar terror' module case. Some of the suspects had reportedly visited Turkiye in the past one year. While seven persons, including doctors, have been arrested in connection with the recovery of explosives, the police and security agencies have questioned over 200 persons in connection with the terror module so far. *—PTI*

Al's Toronto-Delhi flight gets bomb threat; lands safely

NEW DELHI, 13 NOV

Delhi police on Thursday received a bomb threat message for Air India's flight AI188 from Toronto to Delhi, and the flight landed safely in the national capital. The airport's Bomb Threat Assessment Committee found the threat to be 'non-specific'. "On board crew carried out all security drills keeping passenger safett and security as top priority," an Air India spokesperson said. Enhanced security measures, including compulsory secondary ladder point checking for all flights, are in place at all airports after the Delhi blasts. *—PTI*

EC removes Bihar returning officer ahead of counting

PATNA, 13 NOV

The Election Commission has removed the returning officer for the Chenari assembly constituency in Bihar just days before the counting of votes scheduled for Friday. In an official statement, Chief Electoral Officer Vinod Singh Gunjiyal announced that Lalit Bhushan Ranjan, who serves as the additional collector and additional district magistrate of Rohtas, has been relieved of all election-related duties, including overseeing the counting process. The reasons for Ranjan's removal have not been disclosed. He will be replaced by Zafar Hasan, currently the district land acquisition officer of Rohtas. The assembly polls in Bihar were conducted on 6 and 11 November, with results set to be tallied on Friday. *—PTI*

Cong says RSS hired Pak-linked US lobbying firm

NEW DELHI, 13 NOV

The Congress on Thursday alleged that the RSS has engaged "one of Pakistan's official lobbying arms" to espouse its interests in the US, and said this is hardly the first time that the Sangh has "betrayed national interest". There was no immediate response from the RSS to the Congress' claims. Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said a few days ago, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat acknowledged that the RSS isn't a registered organisation and that it does not pay taxes. "Now, we learn that the RSS has spent a significant amount of money to engage one of Pakistan's official lobbying arms - the American law firm Squire Patton Boggs (SPB) - to espouse its interests in the US," Ramesh alleged on X. "This is hardly the first time that the RSS -- with its long tradition of betraying the freedom movement, opposing Mahatma Gandhi and Dr Ambedkar, and attacking the Constitution and the national flag of India — has betrayed national interest. It is a pseudo-nationalist outfit," he said. He also shared a screenshot on X showing US Senate lobbying disclosures which showed that the Squire Patton Boggs had registered as a lobbyist for the RSS. *—PTI*

Al Falah varsity status suspended

The NAAC earlier issued a notice to the university over false certification

NEW DELHI, 13 NOV

The Association of Indian Universities (AIU) on Thursday suspended membership of Al Falah University, which is under scanner in connection with the Red Fort blast case, officials said.

The government has ordered a forensic audit of all records of the Al Falah University, which is under the scanner following the Delhi blast, besides asking the ED and other financial investigative agencies to check the money trail of the Haryana-based institution, sources said.

The Association of Indian Universities (AIU) is a registered society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, with membership of Indian Universities. It provides a forum for academicians of member administrators and universities to exchange views and discuss matters of common concern.

Reporters outside Al Falah University as the J&K Police and Haryana Police, uncovered a large cache of explosives and arms from an apartment in Faridabad on 10 November **PHOTO: PTI**

The decisions have been taken following a high-level meeting chaired by Union Home Minister Amit Shah which reviewed for one-and-a-half hours the progress of the ongoing investigation into blast near Red Fort

"An order has been issued to carry out a forensic audit of all records of Al Falah University. The ED (Enforcement Directorate) and other financial agencies were also asked by the government to check the money trail of Al Falah University," the sources said.

The National Assessment and Accreditation Council had earlier issued a show-cause notice to Al Falah University for displaying false certification on its website.

The Al Falah University at Dhauj in Haryana's Faridabad district near Delhi is a private institute that also houses a hospital on its campus.

Dr Umar Nabi, who, according to officials, was driving the Haryana-bearing registration number car that exploded, was also working with the university as an assistant professor.

According to its website, the University was established by the Haryana Legislative Assembly under the Haryana Private Universities Act.

The university, in a statement on Wednesday, had said it was extending its full cooperation to the concerned investigating authorities. *—PTI*

Punjab cop arrest 10 in ISI-linked grenade attack plan

CHANDIGARH, 13 NOV

Punjab Police have apprehended ten individuals linked to a Pakistan-backed grenade attack module, which aimed to incite unrest in Punjab. The police revealed that the suspects, Kuldeep Singh, Shekhar Singh and Ajay Singh from Sri Muktsar Sahib, were in contact with handlers in Pakistan through operatives in Malaysia. Recovery of a Chinese hand grenade was made during the operation. "These individuals were tasked with executing a grenade attack in a crowded area," said DGP Gaurav Yadav. Investigations indicate link to international masterminds, including Ajay, along with local associates involved in prior drug smuggling. The situation remains under active probe as police explicate both local and international link to this case. *—PTI*

CCTV shows Umar's calm drive, zigzag routes before the blast

NEW DELHI, 13 NOV

Using CCTV footage, Delhi Police has reconstructed Umar Nabi's last hours – right from leaving Faridabad the night before the Red Fort blast to driving an explosives-laden car slowly towards the metro station the next evening seconds before it blew up.

Nabi travelled from Haryana to Delhi through the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway and halted for food at a roadside eatery and spent the night inside his car before entering the city the next morning.His movements indicated meticulous planning and deliberate attempts to avoid detection, police said. Around 6.22pm the car moved towards the Red Fort Metro Station and the explosion occurred at 6.52pm.

CCTV footage showing Dr Umar Nabi's car **PHOTO: X**

Moreover, a flight ticket showed that Adil Ahmad, a J&K native arrested from Saharanpur, had travelled from Srinagar to Delhi on 31 October, raising doubts abou his links with the blast.

Police also cordoned off areas within a 200-metre radius of the red Ford EcoSport car linked to suspects after it was seized from Khandawali village in Faridabad.

Faridabad police handed the person, who allegedly parked the car in the village, over to Delhi Police. *—PTI*

Rubio commends India's professionalism in Delhi blast probe

NEW YORK, 13 NOV

US Secretary of State **Marco Rubio** praised India for its "measured, cautious and very professional" handling of the investigation regarding the car explosion near the Red Fort, which has been classified as a terrorist attack. In remarks made while attending the G7 Foreign Ministers Meeting, Rubio underscored the gravity of the incident, stating, "Clearly, it was a terrorist attack." "We will wait and see what their investigation reveals," Rubio added. *—PTI*

Tyre burst causes panic

Panic gripped locals in southwest Delhi's Mahipalpur when the tyre of a bus burst on Thursday morning. The loud sound caused alarm in the backdrop the Red Fort blast. During an inquiry, a guard informed police that the sound was caused when the rear tyre of a DTC bus had burst. *—PTI*

NIA raids 5 states in Al Qaida Gujarat terror conspiracy case

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Wednesday conducted searches at 10 locations across five states in connection with the Al Qaida Gujarat terror conspiracy case involving illegal Bangladeshi immigrants, officials said. Raids were carried out at premises linked to several suspects and their associates in states including West Bengal, Tripura, Meghalaya, Haryana, and Gujarat. The agency seized digital devices and documents during the raids. The confiscated items have been sent for forensic analysis, an NIA spokesperson said. The case, registered in 2023. *—PTI*

Suvendu claims threat call from Pakistan

KOLKATA, 13 NOV

Bengal BJP leader **Suvendu Adhikari** has claimed he received a call from a Pakistani number threatening to "blow him up."

The Leader of the Opposition in the State Assembly said the call came on Tuesday, the same day he met Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi. Adhikari said he has informed the Home Ministry about the incident.

"Recently, I got a call from Pakistan threatening me," he told reporters. An audio clip has since gone viral, featuring a man speaking in broken Hindi: "Main Pakistan se bol raha hoon... sambhal ke rehna, warna uda diye jaoge."

PTI could not independently verify the clip's authenticity, though the caller's number showed a Saudi country code (+966).

Language experts said the caller's accent resembled that of Bangladeshi migrant workers in the Gulf rather than Pakistani Urdu-Hindi. *—PTI*

KOLKATA HC CANCELS MUKUL ROY'S WEST BENGAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERSHIP

KOLKATA, 13 NOV

The Calcutta High Court on Thursday cancelled the membership of senior leader Mukul Roy in the West Bengal Assembly under the anti-defection law, a first in the history of Indian jurisprudence.

Roy was elected to the House on a BJP ticket from the Krishnanagar Uttar seat in May 2021, but later joined the ruling Trinamool Congress, while retaining his MLA status. The cancellation renders the Krishnanagar Uttar seat vacant, but a bypoll to the seat is unlikely, as elections to the state Assembly are due in early 2026. The court disqualified Roy, passing judgment on petitions by LoP Suvendu Adhikari & BJP MLA Ambika Roy. Adhikari had filed the petition before the high court, challenging Assembly Speaker Biman Banerjee's decision to reject his plea to disqualify Roy, alleging that he switched over to the ruling TMC after being elected on a BJP ticket.

Ambika Roy had moved a separate petition, challenging Roy's appointment as Public Accounts Committee chairman citing that the party had never nominated him. *—PTI*

Bihar parties hold parleys ahead of results

PATNA, 13 NOV

Leaders across party lines in Bihar held intense consultations on Thursday as the State prepared for counting votes from the high-stakes Assembly election that will decide if Chief Minister Nitish Kumar secures a record fifth term.

RJD leader and INDIA bloc's CM candidate Tejashwi Yadav said his party workers were "alert and prepared to counter any unconstitutional activity during counting". His party colleague Sunil Kumar Singh warned of a "Nepal-like situation" if counting was halted "as in 2020".

BJP state president Dilip Jaiswal dismissed the remarks as "desperation", asserting that people had "sealed their mandate for another NDA term". He said senior leaders were in touch with workers at counting centres and expected a peaceful process.

Bihar recorded a voter turnout of 67.13 per cent in the two-phase polls on 6 and 11 November. Counting will begin at 8am across 46 centres in 38 districts, with trends expected by 9am.

Polling officials during a training session on the eve of counting of votes for the Bihar Assembly Election, in Patna **PHOTO: PTI**

The Election Commission said EVMs and VVPATs are sealed in strong rooms under a double-lock system, monitored with CCTV surveillance and two-tier security. Senior district officials will oversee counting operations from control rooms.

Exit polls have predicted an NDA victory, though Yadav dismissed them, claiming the opposition Mahagathbandhan would secure a decisive win. The NDA comprises JD(U), BJP and three smaller allies, while the INDIA bloc includes RJD, Congress and Left parties.

Results, expected to shape Bihar's political course for the next five years, will also decide the future of key leaders. *—PTI*

Women lead by 14% points in 7 Bihar districts

Women voters in Bihar outperformed men by over 14 percentage points in seven districts during the recent Assembly elections, according to the Election Commission.

In 10 other districts, the gap exceeded 10 points, while Patna was the only district to record a higher male turnout, 60.05 per cent against 57.88 per cent for women. Bihar registered a record overall turnout of 67.13 per cent, with women polling 71.78 per cent and men 62.98 per cent. Supaul recorded the widest gap at 20.71 points, followed by Kishanganj (19.5) and Madhubani (18.4). *—PTI*

Rohtas DM dismisses RJD's 'sneaking in EVMs' claim

ROHTAS, 13 NOV

The district administration in Bihar's Rohtas on Thursday dismissed the opposition RJD's claim that a truck loaded with EVMs entered a counting centre without prior information.

District magistrate Udita Singh claimed that the truck entering the counting centre, was loaded with empty steel boxes.

Singh, who is also the district election officer, said, "The truck entered the Bazar Samiti counting centre at 7.59 pm on 12 November after police checking and logbook entry."

A district administration team also carried out an inspection into the alleged irregularities at the site.

Singh urged people not to spread such misleading rumours as the situation ahead of the counting day is "sensitive". *—PTI*

13 LAKH WITHOUT AADHAAR

34 lakh WB Aadhaar holders are dead: EC

KOLKATA, 13 NOV

About 34 lakh Aadhaar card holders in West Bengal have been found to be 'deceased' since the identity card was introduced in January 2009, Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) authorities informed the Election Commission.

About 13 lakh people in the state also never possessed Aadhaar cards, but have since died.

The information was shared during a meeting between UIDAI officials and the state's chief electoral officer (CEO) Manoj Kumar Agarwal, amid the ongoing enumeration exercise of the special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

Following the enumeration phase and publication of the draft rolls on 9 December, if applicants are found to have submitted forms with names that have been removed from the Aadhaar database, they could be summoned by the electoral registration officers for verification.

Poll officials were also gathering information from banks since Aadhaar is linked to most accounts **PHOTO: PTI**

Poll officials were also gathering information from banks since Aadhaar is linked to most accounts.

According to information from the CEO's office, over 6.98 crore (91.19 per cent) enumeration forms have been distributed in the state till 8pm on 12 November.

Meanwhile, the TMC tore into the EC and the BJP alleging the UIDAI figures point to a "silent invisible rigging" designed to erase living voters from the rolls ahead of the 2026 Assembly elections.

The UIDAI's submission contradicted the agency's stand that it does not maintain state-wise or year-wise Aadhaar deactivation records. *—PTI*

US sanctions Indian entity for Iran missile, drone link

WASHINGTON, 13 NOV

An India-based Treasury Department Farmlane Private Limited, has been named among other entities, which were sanctioned by the US on Wednesday for alleged links to Iran's ballistic missile programme.

The Treasury department linked India-based Farmlane to a United Arab Emirates-based firm named Marco Klinge, which allegedly facilitated the procurement of materials like sodium chlorate and sodium perchlorate.

The US on Wednesday announced sanctions against 32 entities and individuals from several countries, including India and China, for the alleged link.

The US State Department said the action is in line with President Donald Trump's efforts to counter Iran's aggressive development of missiles and other asymmetric and conventional weapons.

The US is today sanctioning 32 entities and individuals based in Iran, China, Hong Kong, the United Arab Emirates, Turkiye, India, and other jurisdictions that operate multiple procurement networks supporting Iran's ballistic missile and unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) production, it said. *—PTI*

Teacher dismissed for objecting to Vande Mataram

ALIGARH, 13 NOV

A government school teacher in Aligarh district of Uttar Pradesh has been suspended after he objected to the singing of 'Vande Mataram' during a morning assembly. The teacher, identified as Shamsul Hasan, raised concerns about the song being sung after the National Anthem, claiming it contradicted his religious beliefs and could upset local Muslim families. Following a written complaint from the school, an inquiry revealed Hasan allegedly misbehaved with colleagues. District Basic Shiksha Adhikari Rakesh Kumar Singh stated, "His actions flouted official directives and hurt religious sentiments." Hasan denied misbehaviour but confirmed objections. In response, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath reaffirmed the mandatory singing of 'Vande Mataram' in schools to foster patriotism. *—PTI*

Clerk held, judge 'wanted' in graft case in Mumbai

MUMBAI, 13 NOV

A civil clerk-cum-typist was arrested for allegedly accepting a Rs 15 lakh bribe, prima facie on behalf of an additional sessions judge in Mumbai in exchange for a favourable verdict in a land dispute case, Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) officials have said. The ACB identified the judge, Ejazuddin Salauddin Kazi, as a wanted accused. The case began when Rs 25 lakh was initially demanded for a favourable verdict in a land dispute, later negotiated down to Rs 15 lakh. Clerk Chandrakant Vasudeo claimed the sum was partly for himself. His arrest followed a complaint from the victim, who had refused to pay the initial amount. Both Vasudeo and Judge Kazi are charged under the Prevention of Corruption Act. Investigations are ongoing. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

SIT to grill ex-TDB secy Jayashree in Sabarimala case

PATHANAMTHITTA, 13 NOV

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the Sabarimala temple gold theft will question former Travancore Devaswom Board secretary S Jayashree after her anticipatory bail was rejected. The court noted her alleged role in approving orders transferring gold-plated idol plates to the prime accused. Jayashree denied wrongdoing, citing health concerns, but investigators linked her to the theft. The court stressed the case's gravity. So far, five people, including three Devaswom officials, have been arrested in the two connected gold theft cases. *—PTI*

PHOTO: FACEBOOK

Assault row rocks Kerala influencer couple's marriage

THRISSUR, 13 NOV

Social media influencers Mariyo and Jiji Mariyo are embroiled in a marital dispute following allegations of assault. Jiji filed a complaint after a meeting on 25 October escalated into an argument. According to police, Mariyo is accused of hitting her with a set-top box, biting her hand, and damaging her mobile phone worth Rs 70,000. Mariyo, known for advocating marital harmony, has been charged under several sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. The couple has been living apart for nine months due to professional disagreements, highlighting the complexity of their public persona versus private challenges. *—PTI*

SC bans mining near wildlife zones

Ban in 1km radius of nat'l parks & reserves

NEW DELHI, 13 NOV

The court observed that indiscriminate mining has caused irreversible damage to the flora and fauna within the protected zones **PHOTO: PTI**

In a landmark ruling aimed at strengthening wildlife protection, the Supreme Court on Thursday imposed a nationwide ban on mining within one kilometre of national parks and wildlife sanctuaries, observing that such activities pose serious risks to ecological balance and biodiversity.

The court observed that indiscriminate mining near ecologically sensitive zones has caused irreversible damage to forests, disrupted wildlife corridors, and degraded natural habitats.

A bench led by Chief Justice of India BR Gavai and Justice K Vinod Chandran was hearing petitions linked to the notification of Jharkhand's Saranda Wildlife Sanctuary (SWL) and Sasangdaburu Conservation Reserve (SCR). Referring to the Goa Foundation case, where similar restrictions were imposed, the bench said the same protection must apply nationwide to prevent further environmental degradation.

"It has been the consistent view of this court that mining within one kilometre of protected areas poses serious hazards to wildlife," the bench said. "Mining within or around one kilometre from any national park or sanctuary shall not be permissible under any circumstances."

The apex court also directed the Jharkhand government to notify the Saranda region as a wildlife sanctuary, emphasising the need to balance conservation with community rights. It instructed that tribal and forest dwellers' rights under the Forest Rights Act be safeguarded and the decision be widely publicised.

The Saranda forests in West Singhbhum district are known for their rich biodiversity and mineral deposits. Environmentalists have long warned that unchecked mining in the area could threaten elephant corridors and endemic species. In its affidavit, the state government said it would expand the proposed sanctuary area to 57,519.41 hectares, nearly doubling its earlier plan of 31,468.25 hectares, underscoring its intent to preserve one of India's last remaining intact forest ecosystems. *— PTI*

The accident caused traffic congestion as the highway was blocked by burnt vehicles **PHOTO: SCREENGRAB**

Eight burnt alive as truck rams six vehicles in Pune

PUNE, 13 NOV

At least eight people were burnt alive and 15 others sustained injuries after a truck rammed into six vehicles on a bridge in Pune on Thursday.

The accident occurred on the Bengaluru–Mumbai National Highway 4 after the truck's brakes reportedly failed, causing the driver to lose control and hit the vehicles, officials said. The impact triggered a massive blaze, engulfing several vehicles in flames and leaving eight people dead.

Officials warned that the death toll could rise as some victims sustained critical burn injuries and were rushed to nearby hospitals.

Fire and rescue teams were deployed immediately at the site to extinguish the flames and rescue victims trapped inside vehicles.

The accident caused severe traffic congestion as the highway was blocked by mangled and burnt vehicles. Rescue personnel retrieved charred bodies from the wreckage, while cranes were pressed into service to clear the debris and reopen the route for commuters. Authorities have launched an investigation to determine the cause of the brake failure and whether negligence, mechanical malfunction, or overloading was involved that resulted in the tragedy. *—Agencies*

President Murmu receives 8 cheetahs from Botswana

GABORONE, 13 NOV

President Droupadi Murmu was on Thursday symbolically handed over eight cheetahs by Botswana's President Duma Gideon Boko at the Mokolodi Nature Reserve near Gaborone, marking another milestone in India's Project Cheetah. The two leaders witnessed the release of two of the big cats into a quarantine pen, representing the formal transfer of all eight to India.

The cheetahs, brought from the Kalahari region, will remain in quarantine before being flown to India in the coming weeks. During her three-day state visit, Murmu thanked Botswana for its support in wildlife conservation. India began reintroducing cheetahs in 2022 and now has 27, including 16 born on Indian soil. *—PTI*

AAIB REPORT

Pilot not blamed for AI crash: Centre to SC

NEW DELHI, 13 NOV

The Centre maintained that the AAIB probe is statutory, impartial, and meant to determine the cause, not fix culpability **PHOTO: PTI**

The Supreme Court on Thursday was informed that the Air India pilot has not been blamed in the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau's (AAIB) preliminary report into the 12 June plane crash near Ahmedabad that claimed 265 lives.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, told a bench of Justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi that the probe is being conducted under the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) framework since several foreign nationals were among the victims.

The Centre maintained that the AAIB investigation is statutory, impartial, and meant to determine the cause, not fix culpability. "The inquiry is not to apportion blame on anyone but to ensure such incidents do not recur," Justice Bagchi observed.

The court was hearing a plea filed by 91-year-old Pushkaraj Sabharwal, father of deceased pilot Captain Sumeet Sabharwal, and the NGO Safety Matters Foundation, seeking a judicially monitored inquiry by a retired Supreme Court judge. Senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, appearing for the petitioners, argued that the present investigation lacked independence and transparency.

Justice Kant remarked that "no one in India believes it was the pilot's fault," while cautioning that the proceedings should not turn into a contest between airlines. The bench directed the petitioners to file counter-affidavits responding to the government's submissions and adjourned the matter for two weeks.

SC ADJOURNS DHARAVI PROJECT TENDER HEARING

New Delhi, 13 Nov

The Supreme Court on Thursday adjourned till the first week of December a plea by UAE-based Seclink Technologies Corporation challenging Maharashtra's decision to award the Dharavi redevelopment project to Adani Properties Pvt Ltd. A bench led by Chief Justice BR Gavai, with Justices K Vinod Chandran and Vipul Pancholi, noted that the CJI would be unable to conclude the hearing before his retirement on 23 November. "Our hands are full. How many judgments will I write?" he remarked.

Earlier, on 7 March, the court refused to halt the Rs 5,069-crore project and sought responses from the State and Adani Properties. The Bombay High Court had previously upheld the tender, dismissing Seclink's plea and ruling there was no arbitrariness in awarding the 259-hectare project. Seclink, which offered Rs 7,200 crore in a scrapped 2018 tender, contends the new tender process was unfair. - *Agencies*

AIIMS Nagpur student, IPS officer's daughter, found dead

NAGPUR, 13 NOV

A first-year dermatology student at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Nagpur was found dead in her flat in the Sonegaon area, police said on Thursday.

The deceased, Samruddhi Pandey, 25, was the daughter of IPS officer Krishnakant Pandey, serving as deputy inspector-general with the CRPF in Pune. Police suspect it to be a case of suicide.

- The deceased, Samruddhi Pandey, was the daughter of IPS officer Krishnakant Pandey, who is currently posted DIG in Pune

"Prima facie, it appears to be suicide. She was reportedly under stress for the past few days. Her roommate found the flat locked from inside and, after entering through another door, discovered Samruddhi hanging from a ceiling fan before alerting police," a police official said.

A panchnama was conducted, and the post-mortem report is awaited. "We are speaking to her friends to ascertain the sequence of events leading to the incident," the official added. *—PTI*

Waterborne disease claims 5 lives in Mizoram

AIZAWL, 13 NOV

At least five people, including four from Myanmar, have died in a suspected waterborne disease outbreak in Kakichhuah village, south Mizoram's Lawngtlai district, officials said on Thursday.

The outbreak, believed to have originated from across the Myanmar border, has also infected 27 people aged between 5 and 63.

Lawngtlai Deputy Commissioner Donny Lalruatsanga said an investigation has been launched to trace the source and curb further spread, adding that preventive measures are underway.

The district administration has declared Kakichhuah a containment zone for two months, restricting movement except for medical, election, and emergency purposes.

Lawngtlai Chief Medical Officer Dr Lalmuanawma Jongte said a medical team and Rapid Response Team have been deployed, with health workers maintaining close surveillance.

According to Jongte, water samples collected from the area have been sent to Zoram Medical College and Hospital at Falkawn near Aizawl for testing.

Preliminary evidence points to the contamination originating from Salachhuah village in Myanmar, an offical reported. *—PTI*

Armed forces observe INS Vikrant drill

PORBANDAR, 13 NOV

Three senior commanders of the Army, Navy and Air Force boarded aircraft carrier INS Vikrant to review joint multi-domain operations conducted as part of Exercise Trishul, officials said on Thursday.

Lieutenant General Dhiraj Seth, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Southern Command; Vice Admiral Krishna Swaminathan, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command; and Air Marshal Nagesh Kapoor, Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, South Western Air Command, witnessed carrier-borne flying operations and underway replenishment on Wednesday night.

The large-scale exercise, spanning the Thar Desert to the Kutch region, has seen the three services undertake a series of coordinated sub-exercises over the past two weeks. It will culminate with a joint amphibious landing off the Saurashtra Coast, validating full land-sea-air integration and demonstrating the armed forces' operational synergy.

Lieutenant General Dhiraj Seth, Vice Admiral Krishna Swaminathan, Air Marshal Nagesh Kapoor during the Tri Service Exercise **PHOTO: PTI**

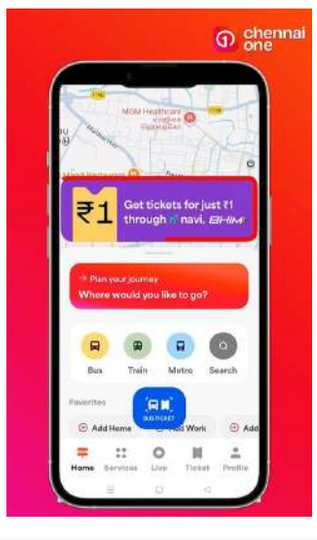
According to the Defense Ministry, Exercise Trishul reflects the military's commitment to JAI — jointness, atmanirbharta (self-reliance) and innovation covering key areas such as electronic warfare, cyber and counter-drone operations, as well as intelligence and surveillance.

The Western Naval Command said the joint presence of the three Commanders-in-Chief aboard INS Vikrant symbolised "a strong step towards unity and integrated functioning," enhancing interoperability and effect-based operations. Recent sub-exercises like MaruJwala, Akhand Prahaar and MahaGujRaj-25 highlighted integrated man oeuvres and civil-military coordination across western India. *—PTI*

CASHLESS TRANSPORT PUSH

Ride Chennai public transport for just Rs 1

CHENNAI, 13 NOV



- CUMTA Member Secretary I Jeyakumar said the initiative aims to promote digital and cashless commuting while encouraging more residents to adopt public transport

The Chennai Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority (CUMTA) has announced a limited-period "One Rupee Ticket" campaign allowing commuters to book bus, metro, or suburban train rides for just Rs 1 via the Chennai One app. The offer, valid from 13 November, can be availed by paying through BHIM Payments App or Navi UPI.

CUMTA Member Secretary I Jeyakumar said the initiative aims to promote digital and cashless commuting while encouraging more residents to adopt public transport. "Getting the Rs 1 ticket is simple, open or download Chennai One, choose your destination, and pay using BHIM or Navi UPI to unlock the special fare," he said.

The offer is limited to one ticket per registered user across either mode of transport and applies only to trips successfully completed during the campaign. Users may also receive surprise cashbacks on subsequent transactions.

Launched by Chief Minister MK Stalin on 22 September, 2025, Chennai One integrates multiple public transport modes, bus, metro, suburban rail, autos, and cabs, under a single digital platform.

CUMTA said the app, since launch, recorded over 5.5 lakh registered users, 14 lakh journey searches, and 8.1 lakh ticket bookings within the first month.

"Designed for seamless travel, Chennai One supports the city's goal of faster, safer, and greener mobility. With this Rs 1 fare offer, we invite everyone to experience digital-first travel and make public transport the preferred choice," Jeyakumar added. *—PTI*

29 yrs after man's death, kin receive Rs 2.8 lakh

THANE, 13 NOV

- The order held the dumper driver negligent in the incident that claimed the life of Bhau Valku Gaikar on 16, April 1996

Nearly three decades after a fatal road accident, a Motor Accident Claims Tribunal (MACT) in Thane has awarded Rs 2.8 lakh compensation to the family of a 66-year-old man killed when a speeding dumper hit his bullock cart in Ulhasnagar in 1996.

The order, issued on 6 November by MACT Member PR Ashturkar, held the dumper driver negligent in the incident that claimed the life of Bhau Valku Gaikar on 16, April 1996.

However, the tribunal criticised the victim's family for concealing that the original claimant, Ramabai Bhau Gaikar, had died in 2005. "The applicants did not even bother to inform that Ramabai had died," the order stated, calling the lapse "negligence on their part."

As a result, the tribunal ruled that the compensation would accrue interest at six per cent per annum only from the date of judgment, not from the original claim filed in 2001.

Advocates Pramod Patil, VB Patil, and Arvind Tiwari represented the applicants, dumper owner, and insurer, respectively. *—Agencies*

NO RELIEF FROM POLLUTION WOES

Delhi residents woke up to a thick smog on Thursday as the air quality remained in the 'severe' category with an AQI reading of 404. Monitoring stations in 27 areas reported AQI levels in the 'severe' range, including Burari (433), Chandni Chowk (455), Anand Vihar (431), Mundka (438), Pusa (302), Bawana (460), and Wazirpur (452). People wore masks as they ventured out to avoid inhaling the polluted air ***PHOTO: PTI***

Then who killed our kids: Nithari victims' families

Grief and disbelief gripped the families of victims of the 2006 Nithari serial killings, a day after the Supreme Court acquitted Surendra Koli, the only convict in the case, and ordered his immediate release if not required in any other matter.

The anguished parents of the deceased children said they have now "accepted defeat" and left their hopes for justice "in the hands of God".

"I have no hope left now. We have accepted our defeat. The rest depends on God," 67-year-old Jhabbulal, father of a 10-year-old victim, said at his home in Sector 31 in Noida in Uttar Praedsh.

The incident had come to light with the discovery of the skeletal remains of eight children from a drain behind businessman Moninder Singh Pandher's house at Nithari in Noida on 29 December, 2006. Koli used to work as a domestic help at Pandher's house at that time.

Remains of Jhabbulal's daughter were identified through DNA testing after her clothes and slippers were recovered from the Pandher's house in Nithari village nearly 19 years ago.

"Who killed our daughter if they were not culprits? Why were they kept in jail for so many years then?" he asked. "I sold my plot of land in Delhi and borrowed money at interest, hoping for justice, but nothing happened. We are poor, and now only god can help us."

Jhabbulal, who irons clothes for a living with his wife Sunita said their family has never recovered from the trauma.

"Our daughter was just 10. Those days were horrific, and even now, remembering them brings tears," said Sunita, her voice trembling. "We did not get justice."

Families like Jhabbulal's said the acquittal has reopened old wounds. "It's as if our children never existed," said another parent.

Locals said that even years after the killings, fear lingers in the neighbourhood. The infamous D-5 bungalow in Nithari, which was once the scene of gruesome discoveries, now stands in ruins, covered by shrubs and wild growth.

Parents of the victims of the 2006 Nithari serial killings hold pictures of their deceased children ***PHOTO: PTI***

"Parents stopped letting their children play outside for years," said a neighbour. "That horror still haunts the locality."

Koli has been lodged in Luksar jail in Gautam Buddh Nagar for the past two years after being transferred from Ghaziabad jail. Following the Supreme Court's acquittal order, he was likely to be released on 12 November, according to a police official

Koli's wife and son have regularly visited him in jail, along with a few other relatives.

The official said the apex court's order, which came on 11 November, would first be sent to the Ghaziabad district judge and then forwarded to Luksar jail, after which the release process will be completed.

On 11 November, a bench of Chief Justice BR Gavai and Justices Surya Kant and Vikram Nath acquitted Koli in the last pending Nithari case, observing that "criminal law does not permit conviction on

Surendra Koli ***PHOTO: PTI***

conjecture or on a hunch".

The apex court allowed Koli's curative petition in the case related to the alleged rape and murder of a 15-year-old girl, setting aside his conviction and ordering his immediate release if not wanted in any other matter.

The court said that although the offences were "heinous" and the suffering of families "beyond measure", the prosecution failed to establish guilt beyond reasonable doubt.

"Suspicion, however grave, cannot replace proof," the court observed, lamenting that "negligence and delay corroded the fact-finding process" and key evidence was lost due to investigative lapses.

The court also pointed out that the Nithari investigation failed to secure the crime scene properly, did not promptly record crucial disclosures, and neglected to examine material witnesses. It also criticised the handling of forensic material and the lack of follow-up on potential leads, including a possible organ trade angle flagged earlier by a government panel.

In January 2015, the Allahabad High Court commuted Koli's death sentence to life imprisonment, citing delays in deciding his mercy plea.

In October 2023, the high court acquitted both Koli and Pandher in other Nithari cases, overturning the death sentences awarded by the trial court. The Supreme Court later dismissed all appeals against those acquittals on 30 July this year —PTI

SALAR سالار

G7 diplomats support Ukraine, avoid trade issues

Top diplomats from the Group of Seven industrialized democracies publicly showed their consensus on Ukraine and Sudan on 12 November, but stayed away from discussing contentious issues like the strikes on boats carrying narcotics by the US military in the Caribbean and trade.

The foreign ministers of the G7 met with Ukraine's foreign minister on Wednesday as Kyiv tries to fend off Russian aerial attacks that have brought rolling blackouts across the country. Andriy Sybiha said Ukraine needs the support of its partners to survive what will be a "very difficult, very tough winter."

"We have to move forward to pressure Russia, to raise the price for the aggression, for Russia, for (Russian President Vladimir) Putin, to end this war," Sybiha said.

The G7 ministers said in a joint statement at the conclusion of the two-day gathering that they are increasing the economic costs to Russia and exploring measures against those who finance Russia's war efforts.

Canada announced more sanctions against Russia, including targeting those involved in the development and deployment of drones. On the other hand Britain, a day earlier, pledged to provide funds for developing the energy infrastructure of war-torn Ukraine.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio made no immediate announcements about new US initiatives, but said on social media that the meeting delved into ways "to strengthen Ukraine's defence and find an end to this bloody conflict that has killed millions."

"We are doing whatever is necessary to support Ukraine," Canadian Foreign Minister Anita Anand said.

The meeting in Niagara-on-the-Lake, near the US border, followed US President Donald Trump's decision to end trade talks with Canada after the Ontario provincial government ran an anti-tariff advertisement in the US, which upset him. That followed a spring of acrimony, since abated, over the President's insistence that Canada should become the 51st state of the country.

Anand declined to talk about the trade dispute.

"I am here to talk about the work that the G7 ministers are doing," she said. "And that is exactly what I think I should be discussing."

Anand met with Rubio, but said she did not bring up trade talks, noting that a different minister leads the trade issue.

US military strikes were also out of the purview of discussions.

The Trump administration says the US military has killed at least 75 people in 19 known strikes against what it says are drug-smuggling vessels in the Caribbean Sea and eastern Pacific Ocean since early September this year.

The administration has been under pressure from Congress to provide more information about who is being targeted and the legal justification for the strikes.

Rubio told reporters that questions about the military campaign and intelligence sharing in support of the operations were not raised with him at all or by any of his G7 or other counterparts on Wednesday.

"It didn't come up once," Rubio said. He also denied a report that Britain has stopped sharing intelligence with US.

"Again, nothing has changed or happened that is impeded in any way our ability to do what we're doing. Nor are we asking anyone to help us with what we're doing -- in any realm. And that includes military," Rubio said.

STRONG STATEMENTS ON SUDAN

The G7 ministers in their joint statement strongly condemned the recent escalation of violence in war-torn Sudan, and Rubio decried the humanitarian situation and said "something needs to be done" to cut off the weapons and other support that the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces are receiving as they battle the Sudanese army.

Asked by reporters about the role of the United Arab Emirates in the conflict, Rubio said the US knows who's involved in supplying the RSF.

"I can just tell you, at the highest levels of our government, that case is being made and that pressure is being applied to the relevant parties," Rubio said, without naming any country. "This needs to stop. I mean, they're clearly receiving assistance from outside."

The Associated Press has reported that US intelligence assessments for many months have found that the United Arab Emirates, a close USally, has been sending weapons to the RSF. The UAE however, denies backing the RSF.

The G7 comprises Canada, the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Japan. Anand also invited the foreign ministers of Australia, Brazil, India, Saudi Arabia, Mexico, South Korea, South Africa and Ukraine to the meeting, which began on 11 November. —*PTI*

Diplomats of G7 nations meet in Niagara-on-the-Lake in Canada ***PHOTO: PTI***

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Takeaways from Epstein files that put Donald Trump on the spot

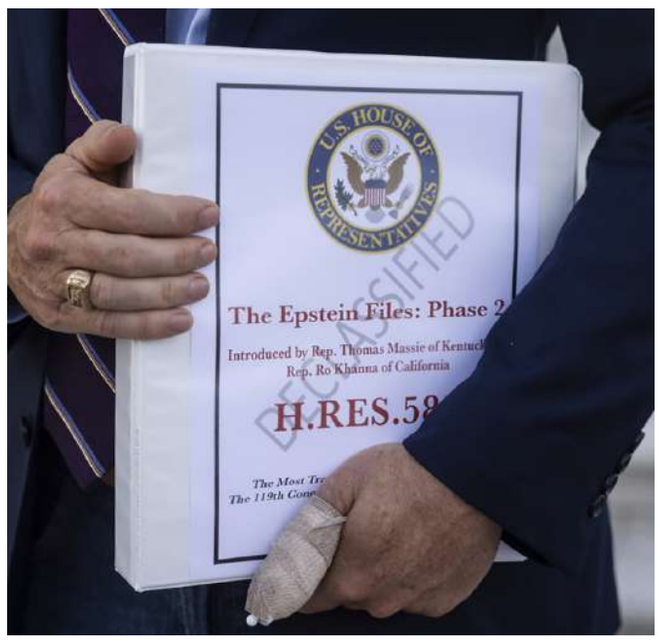
A House committee released 23,000 documents related to Jefferey Epstein on Wednesday, many of them emails the convicted sex offender sent to his rich or influential friends, or to reporters, over many years.

Democrats on the House Oversight Committee initially released three emails where Epstein mentioned President Donald Trump. Republicans on the committee responded by disclosing the bigger trove of documents and accused the Democrats of cherry-picking a few messages out of context in an effort to malign Trump

Epstein served about a year in jail after pleading guilty in 2008 to soliciting prostitution from someone under age 18 but then went on to renew relationships with many influential figures in business, academics and politics.

Epstein killed himself in jail in 2019, a month after his arrest on sex trafficking charges.

Here's some takeaways from the documents released on 12 November.



Democrates on the House Oversight Committee initially released three emails where Jeffery Epstein mentioned President Trump. However, Republicans accused the Democrats of cherry-picking a few messages out of context in an attempt to malign Trump ***PHOTO: PTI***

EPSTEIN SAID TRUMP KNEW ABOUT THE GIRLS

Trump and Epstein were friends for years but had a falling out, even before underage girls started to come forward to accuse Epstein of sexual abuse.

In a 2019 email to journalist Michael Wolff, Epstein mentioned that one of his best-known accusers, Virginia Giuffre, had worked at Trump's Mar-a-Lago club.

Giuffre, who died by suicide this year, had said that Epstein's longtime companion Ghislaine Maxwell recruited her from Mar-a-Lago to give sexualized massages to Epstein. And Trump had long claimed that he banned Epstein from coming to Mar-a-Lago.

Epstein said in an email to Wolff that Trump hadn't asked him to resign from the club, because he hadn't been a member.

Before her death, Giuffre said that she only met Trump once and that he was not among the people who abused her. She didn't think Trump knew of Epstein's misconduct with underage girls.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said that Democrats had leaked select emails to "create a fake narrative to smear President Trump."

MENTIONS OF FORMER PRINCE ANDREW

Giuffre accused Epstein and Maxwell of pressuring her into sexual encounters with Britain's former Prince Andrew, starting when she was 17 years old. Those allegations eventually cost Andrew — now known as Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor — his official titles and his royal residence near Windsor Castle.

In 2011, Epstein emailed a reporter and attacked Giuffre's credibility.

"Yes she was on my plane, and yes she had her picture taken with Andrew as many of my employees have," wrote Epstein, before arguing that "this girl is a total liar."

Mountbatten-Windsor has always denied Giuffre's allegations.

Epstein also mentioned Giuffre and Trump in an email that he sent to Maxwell.

"I have been thinking about that," Maxwell responded.

In other emails, Epstein strategised how to respond to Giuffre's stories, which included an account of meeting former President Bill Clinton on Epstein's island in the Caribbean.

"Presidents at dinner on caribean islands. (clinton was never ever there, easy to confirm). Sharing a bath with a Prince (bathtub too small even for one adult). sex slave being paid thousands of dollars. (while at the exact same time, she was working as a hostess in a burger bar)."

Clinton has acknowledged traveling on Epstein's private jet but has said through a spokesperson that he had no knowledge of Epstein's crimes. Clinton has not been accused of wrongdoing by any of the women who say Epstein abused them, including Giuffre.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PRESS

Many of the documents were email exchanges between Epstein and journalists he had longstanding relationships with, or who solicited his insights on financial markets and Trump.

He was asked, typically off the record, to weigh in on everything from the president's relationships with foreign leaders to the impact of oil prices on wealthy families in Saudi Arabia.

Epstein offered to broker introductions between journalists and powerful people numerous times. He also contested the accusations against him.

In a 2016 email to a reporter, Epstein denied ever spending time with former President Bill Clinton or Vice President Al Gore on his island.

"You can also add, fresh political juice by stating that Clinton was never on the island," Epstein wrote. "I never met Al Gore. No diners on the island either, no matter how much detail has been in the press." —*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Kash's girlfriend sues influencers for Mossad spy claims

FLORIDA, 13 NOV

Alexis Wilkins, the girlfriend of FBI Director Kash Patel, has filed $5 million defamation lawsuits against MAGA influencers for alleging she is a "Mossad honeypot agent" aiming to compromise Patel. Wilkins, who is an American-born country singer, has sued former FBI agent Kyle Seraphin, influencer Sam Parker, and commentator Elijah Schaffer. Court filings reveal she was falsely described as a former Mossad operative through social media posts and podcasts. "These posts got millions of views... people start accusing you," she stated. Wilkins is demanding compensatory, special, and punitive damages, as the allegations have harmed her family and reputation since Patel's appointment in February 2025. She began dating Patel in January 2023.—*Agencies*

B'desh tribunal to deliver verdict on Hasina on 17 Nov

DHAKA, 13 NOV

Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal (ICT-BD) will announce its verdict on November 17 against former prime minister Sheikh Hasina following her trial in absentia for crimes against humanity. Hasina, her former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, and ousted police chief Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun face serious charges, including murder and torture. The court has heightened security in Dhaka in anticipation of unrest, with the ICT-BD hearing concluding after over 28 days of testimony related to the July Uprising. Amid accusations of political bias, Hasina has labelled the tribunal a "kangaroo court" and proposed trials under international supervision, challenging the aothority of the interim government.—*PTI*

Rain causes floods and landslides in Taiwan

TAIPEI, 13 NOV

Taiwan is grappling with heavy rains from a tropical depression that has led to flooding and increased landslide risks across the island. Over 95 people have been injured as authorities evacuated more than 8,500 from vulnerable coastal and mountainous areas. The storm, which made landfall in southern Pingtung County, has recorded over 1.065 metres of rainfall in northern coastal regions like Yilan., prompting warnings of further hazards. "Heavy rain was expected to continue through Thursday," officials warned. Essential services resumed, although some areas remained cautious due to the risk of flooding and flying debris. The depression gradually weakened.—*PTI*

Akon arrested in Georgia over suspended licence

GEORGIA, 13 NOV

Grammy-nominated rapper Akon was arrested in Georgia after police issued a warrant linked to a vehicle registered in his name. Officers from Chamblee Police Department approached the 52-year-old on 7 November, after receiving an alert from Roswell Police Depatment for a white Tesla Cybertruck connected to a suspended license.The vehicle was found outside Tint World, where Akon confirmed he was aware of the warrant. Police said he remained calm during the arrest, and no weapons or contraband were found. He was taken to DeKalb County Jail and released the same day. The warrant stemmed from an incident on 10 September, when Akon's Cybertruck without insurance inusrance, was found stranded. Checks revealed his license had been suspended.—*Agencies*

TRUMP ENDS LONGEST GOVT SHUTDOWN

6,70,000 workers furloughed; 7,30,000 worked without pay

WASHINGTON, 13 NOV

President Donald Trump signed a government funding bill Wednesday night, ending a record 43-day shutdown that caused financial stress for federal workers who went without paychecks, stranded scores of travellers at airports and generated long lines at some food banks.

The shutdown magnified partisan divisions in Washington as Trump took unprecedented unilateral actions — including cancelling projects and trying to fire federal workers — to pressure Democrats into relenting on their demands.

"So I just want to tell the American people, you should not forget (what Democrats did)," Trump said, blaming the Opposition party.

The signing ceremony came just hours after the House passed the measure on a mostly party-line vote of 222-209. The Senate had already passed the measure Monday.

The bill that Trump signed includes a reversal of the firing of federal workers. It also protects federal workers against further layoffs through January and guarantees they are paid once the shutdown is over.

According to the Bipartisan Policy Centre, 6,70,000 government workers were furloughed during the shutdown. Another 7,30,000 were required to continue working without pay. Hundreds of thousands of others, from active duty military to law enforcement to airport security screeners, remained on the job without pay.

SNAP benefits, also known as food stamps, are expected to be immediately made fully available, providing food aid to around 42 million people.

The government shutdown because Democrat lawmakers refused to go along with cuts to health care among other issues like enhanced tax credit, and ended when a few leaders switched sides and voted with Republicans.

Notably, without the enhanced tax credit, premiums on average will more than double for millions of Americans. More than 2 million people would lose health insurance coverage altogether next year, the Congressional Budget Office projected.

US airports will return to normal operations, but it could take some time. It comes after the Federal Aviation Administration ordered a reduction in flights—*Agencies*

President Donald Trump speaks before signing the funding bill to reopen the government, in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington **PHOTO: PTI**

DEMS USING EPSTEIN TO DEFLECT FROM SHUTDOWN: TRUMP

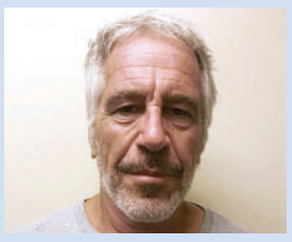
WASHINGTON, 13 NOV

US President Donald Trump slammed the Democrats for bringing up the Jeffrey Epstein case and accusing them of attempting to "deflect " attention from the government shutdown that has cost the United States $1.5 trillion.

Trump made the remarks in a series of posts on Truth Social, calling the claims a "hoax".

Trump said, "The Democrats are trying to bring up the Jeffrey Epstein Hoax again because they'll do anything at all to deflect on how badly they've done on the Shutdown, and so many other subjects. Only a very bad, or stupid, Republican would fall into that trap.... There should be no deflections to Epstein or anything else, and any Republicans involved should be focused only on opening up our Country, and fixing the massive damage caused by the Democrats!"

His comments come as newly released emails from the convicted sex offender, made public by Democrats on the House Oversight Committee, reveal multiple references to Trump in private correspondence spanning over 15 years and suggested that the President was aware of the sexual abuse and had interacted with victims. —*ANI*



- Trump's comments come as newly released emails from Epstein made public by Democrats, reveal multiple references to him in private correspondence spanning over 15 years.

Cambodia evacuates village on Thai border

250 families from Prey Chan village in Cambodia's northwestern province of Banteay Meanchey were evacuated **PHOTO: X @MINISTRYOFINFO1**

PHNOM PENH/BANGKOK, 13 NOV

Cambodia on Thursday evacuated hundreds of people from a village along its disputed border with Thailand, a day after one of its residents was reported killed when shooting between the two nations broke out.

Wednesday's shooting occurred two days after a Thai soldier lost a foot to a land mine while patrolling another area of the border. Thailand blamed Cambodia for the blast and announced it was suspending the ceasefire agreement partly brokered by US President Donald Trump and Malaysia.

About 250 families from Prey Chan village in Cambodia's northwestern province of Banteay Meanchey, where the shooting took place, were evacuated to a Buddhist temple about 30 kilometres from the border, said Ly Sovannarith, the provincial vice governor.

The same village was the site of a violent but not lethal confrontation in September between Thai security personnel and Cambodian villagers

The Cambodian Defence Ministry on Thursday led members of a team assigned to monitor the ceasefire at the border. The observer team included officials from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Both sides have trade blame as the tensions escalated.

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet Hun Manet said the shooting occurred after Thai forces engaged in "numerous provocative actions for many days." The Thai army alleged that Cambodian soldiers initiated the gunfiring and that the Thai side "fired warning shots in response." —*Agencies*

Train Americans, then go home: WH

WASHINGTON/NEW YORK, 13 NOV

President Donald Trump's vision for the H1B visa programme is to allow skilled overseas workers to come to the US, train Americans, and then go back home, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said. The comments come a day after Trump defended his softening stance on the programme, to the dismay of his Conservative MAGA base.

"The President's vision here is to bring in overseas workers, where these jobs went, who have the skills. Three, five, seven years to train the US workers, then they can go home," Bessent said in on Fox News on Wednesday.

Bessent was asked about Trump's latest remarks on the H-1B visa programme, where the President said America has to bring in talent since it does not have "certain talents".

Bessent said that for 20-30 years, the US has offshored precision manufacturing jobs. "And the President's point here is, again, we can't snap our fingers and say, 'You're going to learn how to build ships overnight'. We are very keen on bringing the semiconductor industry back to the country "

A day earlier, Trump said the H1B visa programme was crucial to "bring in talent", which was seen as backtrack from his administration massively hiking the fee for the document.

Meanwhile, Secretary of Department of Homeland Security Kristi Noem said America is going to keep using the visa programmes. —*PTI*

- "The President's vision here is to bring in overseas workers, where these jobs went, who have the skills. Three, five, seven years to train the US workers, then they can go home," Bessent said.

Senators will be jailed for corruption: Philippine President

MANILA, 13 NOV

Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr on Thursday said that many of the 37 powerful senators, members of Congress and wealthy businessmen implicated in a massive corruption scandal involving flood control projects would be locked up in jail by Christmas.

Marcos said an independent fact-finding commission has filed criminal complaints for graft, corruption and plunder, a non-bailable offense, against the suspects.

Criminal complaints have also been filed against 86 construction company executives and nine government officials for allegedly evading taxes totalling nearly 9 billion Pesos. Corruption was behind substandard, defective flood control projects. —*PTI*

Suicide bomber was Afghani, says Pak

ISLAMABAD, 13 NOV

Pakistan's Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Thursday said that the suicide bomber involved in the deadly Islamabad bombing was an Afghan national.

At least 12 people were killed on Tuesday when a suicide bomber detonated his explosives near the entrance of a court.

Addressing the Senate on Thursday, Naqvi said, "We have traced the attacker. The suicide bomber is an Afghan national," he said.

The minister also said that the suicide bombers involved in the Wana Cadet College attack in South Waziristan district this week were also from Afghanistan.

Six people were injured on Monday after a suicide-bomber detonated explosives at the main gate of the Wana Cadet College in South Waziristan, bordering Afghanistan.

Replying to a question outside the parliament, Naqvi rejected the idea of talks with militants. "How can we talk to them when they are throwing bombs on us? It is not possible."

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said that terrorism increased after the Taliban came to power.

He also targeted the previous government of Imran Khan for allegedly allowing the Taliban to come back from Afghanistan. —*PTI*

Pakistani investigators examine a damaged car at the site of bombing outside the gates of a district court in Islamabad in Pakistan **PHOTO: PTI**

GOT 1.3 MILLION VOTES

Iraqi PM al-Sudani's coalition wins national polls

BAGHDAD, 13 NOV

Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani's coalition has secured the highest number of votes in the parliamentary election, officials announced on Wednesday, Al Jazeera reported.

The vote was held on Tuesday at a time when Iraq is witnessing one of its rare periods of stability despite tensions.

According to the Independent High Electoral Commission, al-Sudani's "Reconstruction and Change" coalition received around 1.3 million votes, about 3,70,000 more than the nearest rival group. After initial results, al-Sudani said the 56 per cent turnout reflected the "restoration of confidence in the political system".

Still, frustration was visible across several regions. Many Iraqis chose not to vote, especially in Baghdad and Najaf, after influential Shia cleric Muqtada al-Sadr urged his followers to boycott what he described as a "flawed election", as per Al Jazeera.

Results followed usual patterns in most provinces, Shia parties led in Shia-majority areas, Sunni parties performed well in Sunni regions, and Kurdish groups dominated in Kurdish territories. But there were unexpected outcomes too. In Nineveh, a mainly Sunni province, the Kurdistan Democratic Party won most seats. In Diyala, where many Kurds live, no Kurdish candidates won, something that has not happened since 2005.

With 329 seats in Iraq's parliament, no single group has enough numbers to form a government. Political parties will now begin negotiations to build alliances.

Since the 2003 US-led invasion that toppled Saddam Hussein, Iraq has held six national elections. The country continues to struggle with the effects of conflict, corruption, weak public services and the impact of ISIS. —*ANI*

Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani said the 56 per cent voters' turnout restored confidence in the political system **PHOTO: PTI**

Tehran likely to see evacuation amid drought

TEHRAN, 13 NOV

Iran, particularly its capital Tehran, is confronting an unprecedented drought this autumn, characterised by record-low rainfall and nearly empty reservoirs. President Masoud Pezeshkian has warned that without significant rain in the coming days, water rationing may be necessary, and he stated, "If rationing doesn't work, we may have to evacuate Tehran." This remark has drawn widespread criticism, with former Tehran mayor Gholamhossein Karbaschi calling the idea "a joke" that "makes no sense at all."

Rainfall is not expected over the next 10 days, and the situation is dire, with numerous dams at dangerously low levels. The Latian Dam holds less than 10 per cent of its capacity, while the Karaj Dam is depleted, containing only 8 per cent usable water. —*Agencies*

One wall and 3 copies of Quran were torched at the mosque **PHOTO: X**

Israeli settlers torch mosque in West Bank

DEIR ISTIYA, 13 NOV

Israeli settlers torched and defaced a mosque in a Palestinian village in the central West Bank overnight, scribbling hateful messages in a show of defiance, a day after some Israeli leaders condemned a recent attack by settlers against Palestinians.

One wall and at least three copies of the Quran and some of the carpeting at the mosque in the Palestinian town of Deir Istiya had been torched.

On one side of the mosque, settlers had left graffiti messages like "we are not afraid," "we will take revenge again," and "keep on condemning." The Hebrew scrawl, difficult to make out, appeared to reference Maj Gen Avi Bluth, the chief of the military's Central Command, issued a rare denunciation of the violence on Wednesday.

It was the latest in a string of attacks that have provoked expressions of concern from top officials, military leaders and the Trump administration. Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has not commented on the surge in violence.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Wednesday said there was "some concern about events in the West Bank spilling over and creating an effect that could undermine what we're doing in Gaza."

Meanwhile, The Israeli military said it killed four terror operatives on the Israel-controlled side of the Yellow Line in the southern Gaza Strip on Wednesday, including several gunmen detected near troops. —*Agencies*

PHOTO:PTI

Gold surges by Rs 3,000 to Rs 1.30 lakh/10g

NEW DELHI, 13 NOV

Gold prices surged Rs 3,000 to Rs 1,30,900 per 10g in the national capital on Thursday tracking firm global cues and weak dollar, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Traders said the end of US government's shutdown also supported the appeal of the safe-haven asset. The precious metal of 99.5 per cent purity extended its gains for the third straight day, jumping Rs 3,000 to Rs 1,30,300 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes). In the local bullion market, gold of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 1,27,900 per 10g in the previous market session. Silver prices skyrocketed Rs 7,700 to Rs 1,69,000 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes) on Thursday. *—PTI*

Rupee falls by 8P, closes at 88.70 against USD

MUMBAI, 13 NOV

The rupee consolidated in a narrow range and settled for the day lower by 8 paise at 88.70 against the US dollar on Thursday, as foreign fund outflows and continuous dollar demand from local importers, including oil companies, exerted pressure on the local currency. Forex traders said rupee is trading in a tight range, as overnight decline in crude oil prices and renewed optimism over US-India trade talks providing a steady anchor and restricted the downfall. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 88.66 against the US dollar and touched an intra-day high of 88.63 and a low of 88.73 during the day. The domestic unit finally settled at 88.70, registering a loss of 8 paise from its previous close. *—PTI*

'India's vegetable oil imports at 16.3MT in FY25'

NEW DELHI, 13 NOV

India's vegetable oil imports were unchanged at 16.3 million tones (MT) in the 2024–25 marketing year ending in October, the Solvent Extractors' Association of India (SEA) said. October imports totaled 1.33MT of edible oils, down 9 per cent year-on-year. Soybean oil imports hit a record 5.47MT, while palm oil imports dropped to 7.58MT from 9.02MT. Soft oil imports rose to 8.43MT, lifting their share to 53 per cent of total imports. The government's move in May to widen the import duty gap between crude and refined oils curtailed refined palm oil shipments. However, India imported 750,000 tones of refined soybean and sunflower oils from Nepal under a zero-duty trade deal. *—PTI*

TCS to lead AI-driven IT revamp for Lion

NEW DELHI, 13 NOV

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), India's largest IT services firm, has been chosen by Australia-based beverage brand Lion to revamp its IT operations using AI-driven solutions. This partnership aims to enhance Lion's operational resilience and productivity by moving away from legacy systems to modern cloud infrastructure, while also implementing advanced AI-enabled services. TCS will utilise its expertise and innovative platforms, including Cognix, to automate service delivery, upgrade cybersecurity measures, and enhance customer experience. The initiative is expected to stimulate Lion's business growth and innovation, optimise operational costs, and introduce AI-led personalised solutions. "By leveraging cutting-edge technologies such as AI and cloud... we will accelerate innovation," stated Krishnan Ramanujam, President of TCS's Consumer Business Group. *—PTI*

Ex-MD of Jaypee Infratech held in ₹14,599 crore fraud

Agency alleges that funds were diverted to various trusts

NEW DELHI, 13 NOV

The Enforcement Directorate on Thursday arrested Manoj Gaur, former MD of realty company Jaypee Infratech Ltd, in a money laundering case probe linked to Rs 14,599 crore alleged fraud with home buyers, official sources said.

The businessman was taken into custody under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), they said.

The agency has alleged that funds collected from home buyers were diverted to various trusts leaving the projects incomplete and investors cheated.

The ED found that Gaur is the Managing Trustee of Jaypee Sewa Sansthan (JSS), which received part of the diverted funds.

The investigation against him pertains to a case of alleged cheating of home buyers, the officials said.

"The ED initiated investigation against Jaypee group on the basis of multiple FIRs registered by the Economic Offences Wings (EOW) of Delhi and Uttar Pradesh Police, based on complaints filed by home buyers of Jaypee Wishtown and Jaypee Greens projects, alleging criminal conspiracy, cheating, and criminal breach of trust against the company and its promoters," the agency said in a statement.

It alleged that the funds collected from thousands of home buyers for construction and completion of residential projects were diverted for purposes other than construction, leaving the home buyers defrauded and their projects incomplete.

The ED had conducted searches on 23 May, at 15 locations in Delhi, Noida, Ghaziabad, and Mumbai, including the offices and premises of Jaiprakash Associates Ltd and Jaypee Infratech Ltd.

"During the searches, the ED seized a large volume of financial and digital records, along with documents evidencing the offence of money laundering and diversion of funds," it said.

Meanwhile, a Delhi court on Thursday sent Gaur to five-day custody of the ED. The agency sought seven-day custody of Gaur, arrested under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act. *—PTI*

Ex-MD of Jaypee Infratech Ltd Manoj Gaur PHOTO: ANI

₹190 cr duty: Industrialist's home raided

NEW DELHI, 13 NOV

The ED conducted searches under the PMLA, 2002, searching the residential and business premises of an industrialist in relation to a case related to alleged custom duty evasion of Rs 190 crore. "The Enforcement Directorate has seized incriminating evidences in relation to the imports and exports and digital devices of key persons during searches conducted on 12 November at the residential premises and business premises of one of the key persons behind the evasion of custom duty of Rs 190 crores and his employees, in whose names the entities were incorporated outside India for effecting imports and exports in their names," official said. *—ANI*

50:50 JOINT VENTURE

Mahindra enters insurance with Canada's Manulife

NEW DELHI, 13 NOV

Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M) has signed an agreement with Toronto-based Manulife to establish a 50:50 life insurance joint venture, involving a total investment of Rs 7,200 crore from both partners.

Mahindra Group CEO and Managing Director Anish Shah said the partners aim to build a business valued between Rs 18,000 crore and Rs 30,000 crore within the next decade, describing these as "conservative estimates". The venture seeks to become the leading life insurer in rural and semi-urban India while building a strong position in urban protection solutions, an area where India remains under-penetrated.

- The two firms plan to apply for a license from the insurance regulator within two to three months, with operations expected to commence in around 15 to 18 months.

The two firms plan to apply for a license from the insurance regulator within two to three months, with operations expected to commence in around 15 to 18 months. Each shareholder will commit up to Rs 3,600 crore, with an initial investment of Rs 1,250 crore over the first five years. M&M's contribution will be funded through dividends from Mahindra Finance.

Anish Shah PHOTO: PTI

Shah said life insurance represents a logical extension of Mahindra's financial services portfolio, given the sector's significant growth potential. The company is also open to entering the general insurance space if regulations allow composite licenses.

Manulife President and CEO Phil Witherington said the partnership marks an important milestone, strengthening Manulife's presence in one of the world's fastest-growing insurance markets.

India's life insurance sector, which has grown at 12 per cent annually over the past five years, remains under-penetrated but poised for rapid expansion. *—PTI*

India's economy to grow by 7% in 2025: Moody's

NEW DELHI, 13 NOV

Moody's Ratings has forecasted that India's economy will grow by 7 per cent in 2025 and 6.5 per cent in 2024, bolstered by domestic and export diversification along with a neutral-to-easy monetary policy stance. The agency's Global Macro Outlook highlighted that robust infrastructure spending and solid consumption underpin India's growth, despite the private sector exhibiting caution towards capital expenditure.

Moody's described India as the fastest-growing economy in the G-20, expecting it to achieve an annual growth rate of 6.5 per cent through 2027. The projected real GDP growth for the 2025 calendar year is set at 7 per cent, up from 6.7 per cent in 2024. Despite encountering 50 per cent tariffs on some products from the US, Indian exporters have successfully redirected their shipments, with overall exports increasing by 6.75 per cent in September, even as exports to the US fell by 11.9 per cent .

"We expect its economy to continue to grow around 6.5 per cent in 2026 and 2027, supported by a neutral-to-easy monetary policy stance amid low inflation," Moody's stated. On the global front, Moody's indicated that growth will remain steady but subdued, with advanced economies expanding modestly & emerging markets maintaining stronger momentum. *—PTI*

Groww stock climbs 5% on 2nd day

NEW DELHI, 13 NOV

Shares of Billionbrains Garage Ventures, the parent company of stock broking firm Groww, extended its gains for the second consecutive day on Thursday, climbing more than 5 per cent on the bourses.

The scrip of the company climbed by 5.46 per cent to close at Rs 138.09 apiece on the BSE.

On the NSE, shares of Bengaluru-based Groww rose 4.66 per cent to settle at Rs 137.45 apiece.

During the day, the company's shares rallied by 17.22 per cent and 16.88 per cent to hit a high of Rs 153.50 each on the BSE and NSE, respectively.

At the end of the session, the company's market valuation stood at Rs 84,856.09 crore on the NSE.

In terms of volume, 53.52 crore equity shares of the company were traded on the NSE while 7.57 crore shares exchanged hands on the BSE during the day.

The 30-share BSE barometer Sensex ended with a slight gain of 12.16 points, or 0.01 per cent, at 84,478.67. The broader NSE Nifty closed the session in green with just 3.35 points, or 0.01 per cent, higher at 25,879.15.

Billionbrains Garage Ventures had fixed a price band of Rs 95-100 per share for its IPO, targeting a valuation of over Rs 61,700 crore (about USD 7 billion). *—PTI*

PhysicsWallah IPO subscribed nearly 2 times

NEW DELHI, 13 NOV

The initial public offering of edtech unicorn PhysicsWallah received nearly 2 times subscription on the final day of bidding on Thursday.

The Rs 3,480-crore initial share sale received bids for 33,62,27,044 shares against 18,62,04,143 shares on offer, translating to 1.81 times subscription, according to the data available with the NSE.

The portion for Qualified Institutional Buyers fetched 2.70 times subscription, while the Retail Individual Investors segment subscribed 1.06 times. The quota for Non-Institutional Investors has been subscribed only 48 per cent.

On Wednesday, the initial public offering (IPO) of PhysicsWallah received a lukewarm response from investors, garnering only 13 per cent subscription.

The company fixed a price band of Rs 103-109 per share for its IPO, which may peg its valuation at over Rs 31,500 crore at the upper end. PhysicsWallah will make its market debut on 18 November. *—PTI*

Mkt settle tad high amid global volatility

MUMBAI, 13 NOV

Stock markets' three-day winning run paused on Thursday with benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty closing slightly higher as volatile global sentiment triggered profit-booking, aiding the withdrawal momentum for foreign capital.

After oscillating between gains and losses during the day, the 30-share BSE barometer Sensex ended with a gain of 12.16 points, or 0.01 per cent, at 84,478.67.

During the session, it touched a high of 84,919.43 and a low of 84,253.05.

The broader NSE Nifty closed the session in green with just 3.35 points, or 0.01 per cent, higher at 25,879.15.

From the Sensex pack, Asian Paints, ICICI Bank, PowerGrid, Larsen & Toubro, Bajaj Finserv, Bharti Airtel, Sun Pharmaceuticals, Maruti Suzuki India, Axis Bank, UltraTech Cement and HCL Technologies were the only gainers.

On the other hand, Eternal, Tata Motors' commercial vehicles arm, Mahindra & Mahindra, Tata Steel, Bharat Electronics Ltd, Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles, Trent, Tata Consultancy Services, Hindustan Unilever, and Infosys were among the laggards.

The BSE Midcap gauge fell 0.34 per cent and smallcap closed 0.30 per cent lower.

On the other hand, Capital Goods, Auto, FMCG, Consumer Discretionary, Oil & Gas, Energy, Healthcare, Industries, IT, Power and Teck closed lower.

A total of 2,450 stocks declined while 1,773 advanced and 144 remain unchanged on the BSE. *—PTI*

India's textile exports surge by 10%: Govt

NEW DELHI, 13 NOV

India's textile exports to 111 countries have demonstrated robust growth, recording a 10 per cent increase year-on-year during the period from April to September 2025. This impressive resilience comes despite facing global headwinds and tariff-related obstacles in key markets, according to the government. These markets contributed $8,489.08 million during the first half of the financial year, a notable rise from $7,718.55 million the previous year. The textile ministry reported an overall marginal growth of 0.1 per cent in India's global textile exports compared to the same period in 2024. Significant growth was observed in major markets, with UAE seeing a rise of 14.5 per cent, Japan 19 per cent, and both Spain & France around 9 per cent. *—PTI*

Ch'garh sends China record copper export

NEW DELHI, 13 NOV

Chhattisgarh has achieved a remarkable milestone by exporting 12,000 metric tones of copper concentrate to China, marking the largest-ever consignment of the mineral from India. The landmark shipment was flagged off from the Multi-Modal Logistics Park (MMLP) in Nava Raipur, underscoring the state's growing prominence in India's industrial and logistics network.

The first rake, carrying 2,200 tones, was shipped from Visakhapatnam port on 11 November, with the remaining consignments being dispatched in batches. Officials said the achievement firmly positions Chhattisgarh on the global trade map as an emerging logistics hub. Developed by Department of Industries, the Nava Raipur MMLP features modern cargo management systems, integrated rail connectivity, and high-speed transport facilities, enabling efficient international trade. Chhattisgarh is also India's only producer of tin, accounting for 100 per cent of national output and 36 per cent of tin reserves, largely located in Dantewada and Sukma districts. *—PTI*

ACCESSIBLE IN UPI APP

PhonePe, OpenAI to bring ChatGPT to India

NEW DELHI/SAN FRANCISCO, 13 NOV

Fintech major PhonePe on Thursday said it has partnered with OpenAI to bring ChatGPT features to its users in India.

The collaboration will allow PhonePe users to interact with ChatGPT's advanced artificial intelligence capabilities directly via the PhonePe consumer app and the PhonePe For Business app, the company said in a statement.

The integration is expected to provide users with smarter, more relevant information for a range of everyday needs, from travel planning to shopping.

"Our collaboration with PhonePe is a significant milestone in our mission to make AI more accessible to people throughout India. India is a global hub for innovation, and PhonePe's deep understanding of the country's fabric and its user base make it the ideal partner.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

"This partnership will demonstrate the immense value of consumer AI across India, helping millions of users enhance their daily lives," Oliver Jay, Managing Director for International Strategy at OpenAI, said.

Additionally, **Sam Altman**, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of OpenAI, the company behind ChatGPT, stated on Thursday that India is poised to become one of the company's most significant partners.

Speaking to the members of the India Global Forum (IGF) during an immersive session at OpenAI's headquarters in San Francisco, Altman said, "India is going to be one of our biggest partners."

—Agencies

Andhra, 2 Taiwanese firms inks ₹18,400 cr deal

VISAKHAPATNAM, 13 NOV

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Thursday said that the state has inked two agreements with an investment of Rs 18,400 crore, involving Taiwanese companies Allegiance Group and Creative Sensor Inc.

The CM noted that eJoule India JV, a partnership between eJoule Inc (USA), Creative Sensor Inc (Taiwan) and Senaste Technologies LLP (India) will invest Rs 18,000 at Orvakal in Kurnool district.

"The Government of Andhra Pradesh signed two significant MoUs with leading Taiwanese companies, marking another step in strengthening the state's industrial growth story," Naidu said in a post on 'X'.

As part of the deal, eJoule India JV will establish India's first 23 GWh precursor-free single-crystal cathode active material and a solid state electrolyte manufacturing facility.

According to the CM, this investment will generate around 2,000 direct jobs.

He also said that Allegiance Group will set up an industrial park across 470 acres in Kuppam with an investment of Rs 400 crore, creating about 50,000 direct and indirect jobs. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Jyothi leads India's golden charge at Asian Archery

DHAKA, 13 NOV

Seasoned campaigner Jyothi Surekha Vennam led from the front as Indian compound archers enjoyed a stellar outing, clinching three golds and a silver on a productive day at the Asian Championships here on Thursday. Jyothi secured the women's individual and team titles to cap a perfect day for the 29-year-old. She first teamed up with Deepshikha and Prithika Pradeep to register a thrilling 236-234 victory over Korea in the compound women's team final. The trio delivered near-flawless shooting, producing ends of 59 (10, 10, 10, 10, 9, 10) and 58 (10, 10, 10, 9, 10, 9) to outclass the Korean combination of Park Yerin, Oh Yoohyun, and Jungyoon Park. The Asian Games champion then claimed the compound women's individual crown with a hard-fought 147-145 win over 17-year-old Prithika in an all-India final.—*PTI*

Lakshya Sen enters quarters in Japan Masters

KUMAMOTO, 13 NOV

Star Indian shuttler Lakshya Sen progressed to the quarterfinals of the men's singles competition at the Kumamoto Masters Japan with a straight-game win over Singapore's Jia Heng Jason Teh here on Thursday. 2021 World Championship bronze winner, Sen, seeded seventh here, prevailed over world No. 20 Teh 21-13 21-11 in another 39-minute contest. The world No.15 Sen will clash with former world champion Loh of Singapore in the quarterfinals.Lakshya opened up an 8-5 lead early in the opening game. Later in the day, HS Prannoy will be up against Denmark's Rasmus Gemke.—*PTI*

Teenager Manoj S storms into lead at Trident Open

CHANDIGARH, 13 NOV

Teenager Manoj S fired a five-under 67 to take a one-shot lead after round three of the inaugural Trident Open golf tournament here on Thursday. At the age of 17 years, seven months, and 26 days, Manoj, who is currently nine-under 207, is now in line to become the youngest player to win as a professional on the PGTI. The record is currently held by Shubhankar Sharma, who achieved the feat (PGTI Cochin Masters 2014) at the age of 17 years, eight months, and 22 days. Karandeep Kochhar holds the overall record for the youngest player to win on the tour as he registered his maiden win (PGTI Players Championship at Tollygunge Club 2016) while still an amateur at the age of 17 years and five months.—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Shane Watson joins KKR as Assistant Coach

PERTH, 13 NOV

In a major announcement ahead of the 2026 season of the Indian Premier League (IPL), Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) have confirmed the appointment of Australian great Shane Watson as their Assistant Coach. The move marks another high-profile addition to KKR's backroom staff as they aim to build on their strong performances in recent years. A legend of the modern game, Watson brings a wealth of knowledge, leadership, and tactical acumen to the two-time IPL champions. Over a glittering international career, the former all-rounder represented Australia in 59 Tests, 190 ODIs, and 58 T20 Internationals, scoring more than 10,000 runs.—*PTI*

India wary of SA's spin threat in opening Test

Winning in India would be second only to the World Test Championship: Bavuma

KOLKATA, 13 NOV

India's awe-inspiring batting depth will face a stern test against South Africa's quality spin attack when the reasonably well-matched sides clash in an eagerly anticipated two-match Test series beginning here on Friday.

India would be haunted by the ghosts of last year's home debacle against New Zealand when their home record was shattered by Kiwi spinners Ajaz Patel, Mitchell Santner, and Glenn Phillips, who shared 36 wickets across three Tests, fashioning an unprecedented 0-3 whitewash.

The reigning World Test champions are known for fiery pacers historically, but are currently armed with one of the most potent spin groups in world cricket.

The Proteas arrive on the back of a morale-boosting 1-1 draw in Pakistan, achieved without inspirational captain Temba Bavuma.

South Africa's spin trio of Keshav Maharaj, Simon Harmer, and Senuran Muthusamy accounted for 35 of the 39 wickets to fall across the series, outperforming Pakistan's own slow-bowling contingent of Noman Ali, Sajid Khan, and Salman Agha, who managed 21 wickets collectively.

It was little wonder then that India assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate called the rival bowling line-up a "subcontinent-style attack".

India's Axar Patel with teammates during a training session on the eve of the first Test cricket match between India and South Africa, at Eden Gardens in Kolkata, on Thursday
PHOTO: PTI

There is a conflict whether to go for an extra seamer or a spinner, but spinners often decide game

-Shubman Gill, Indian captain

"They have got four spinners at their disposal, and most likely they will play three. It's a little bit like playing against a subcontinent team," he said.

"We've addressed that early on. Hopefully, we've learned from the New Zealand series."

Simon Harmer, now 36 and holder of 1,000 first-class wickets, is no stranger to Indian conditions.As a 26-year-old on the 2015 tour under Hashim Amla, he featured in two Tests in Mohali and Nagpur and claimed prized scalps such as Cheteshwar Pujara, Rohit Sharma, and Wriddhiman Saha, all known for their spin-playing prowess.

South Africa captain reveals stunning 'toss' advice from Kane Williamson for Tests against India
PHOTO: PTI

Pant, who sustained a foot fracture. It's never easy to come back after injury, but glad I have done it

-Rishabh Pant, Indian wicket keeper

A decade later, Harmer remains as wily. He arrives in Kolkata after an eight-wicket match haul in Rawalpindi last month that spun South Africa to a series-levelling win over Pakistan. The prospect of conquering India in their own backyard carries a special allure for the reigning World Test champion skipper, Temba Bavuma, who said winning the two-match series is almost on par with South Africa's World Test Championship triumph earlier this year.

With Rishabh Pant fit again and an in-form Dhruv Jurel set to play as a specialist batter, the middle order looks more stable. Washington Sundar, who topped India's spin charts in that New Zealand series with 16 wickets, provides drift and bounce and lends depth with the bat. "You've got to switch on mentally and be ready for 16–17 days of really tough work.

Gill's biggest challenge will be adjusting to different formats: Pujara

Shubman Gill's biggest challenge in his nascent journey as an all-format player will be the need to switch between three versions of the sport quickly, felt former India batter **Cheteshwar Pujara**, but expressed confidence that the skipper has the required maturity to live up to the task.

INDIA VS SOUTH AFRICA

INDIA vs SOUTH AFRICA
Match starts at
9.30 pm IST

HEAD TO HEAD AT KOLKATA

PLAYED:	19
INDIA Won:	11
SA Won:	5
DRAW	3

Gill was in Australia recently leading the ODI side, and he was deputy to Suryakumar Yadav in the T20s before travelling back to India for the two-match Test series against South Africa, starting at Kolkata on Friday.

"Someone like Shubman, who is still a young player, doesn't really have a heavy physical workload. But mentally, it can be challenging," JioStar expert Pujara said during the Media Day ahead of the first Test against the Proteas.

"He was recently in Australia leading the Indian one-day squad, then he played T20s, and now he suddenly has to shift from white-ball to red-ball cricket, not in Australia, but in India, where the conditions are completely different. —*PTI*

GT names Birla Estates as principal sponsors for IPL

AHMEDABAD, 13 NOV

Gujarat Titans, on Thursday, named Birla Estates, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Aditya Birla Real Estate Limited (ABREL), as the team's principal sponsor for the 2026 Indian Premier League. Birla Estates replaced fantasy gaming platform Dream11, which has massively curtailed its operations after a central government act led to a blanket ban on real money gaming in August this year.

KT Jithendran, MD and CEO of Birla Estates, said: "This collaboration allows us to connect with millions of fans across India and beyond, celebrating shared values of passion, perseverance, and progress. Together, we look forward to building something truly special that resonates both on and off the field."

Colonel Arvinder, COO of Gujarat Titans, added: "Partnering with Birla Estates not only enhances the Gujarat Titans' brand portfolio but also reflects our commitment to collaborating with iconic institutions that elevate our presence across geographies.

LSG trades Shardul Thakur to Mumbai Indians

Lucknow Super Giants all-rounder Shardul Thakur was on Thursday traded to Mumbai Indians for Rs two crore ahead of the 2026 Indian Premier League.

"The Mumbai-based all-rounder was picked up by the Lucknow Super Giants for INR 2 crore as an injury replacement for the 18th edition of the league, wherein he featured in 10 games.

"The all-rounder has been traded to the Mumbai Indians for his existing player fee of INR 2 crore," said the IPL in a statement. Thakur has played 105 IPL matches, scoring 325 runs and taking 107 wickets. —*PTI*

PCB reworks schedule of tri-series against Zim, SL

RAWALPINDI, 13 NOV

The Pakistan Cricket Board has rescheduled the opening of a T20I tri-series against Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe from 17 to 18 November, besides making Rawalpindi the sole venue for the tournament amid security concerns in the wake of a suicide attack in Islamabad. The second game of the seven-match rubber has also been postponed by a day to 20 November. Earlier, Lahore was scheduled to host five games of the event, including the final on 29 November —*PTI*

SERIES SCHEDULE

- 18 November – Pakistan v Zimbabwe
- 20 November – Sri Lanka v Zimbabwe
- 22 November – Pakistan v SL
- 23 November – Pakistan v Zimbabwe
- 25 November – Sri Lanka v Zimbabwe
- 27 November – Pakistan v SL
- 29 November –Final

KSCA ELECTIONS

Venkatesh Prasad, along with KSCA members, arrives to file nominations for the president post in Bengaluru on Thursday
PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

Chess WC: Arjun, Harikrishna in pre-quarters, Pragg ousted

PANAJI, 13 NOV

A runner-up in the last edition, R. Praggnanandhaa began as one of the strongest favourites at the Chess World Cup. He has had some fabulous results this year too, but not on Thursday.

The third seed from Chennai was knocked out in the fourth round by Russia's Daniil Dubov at the Resort. After settling for a 12-move draw in the first tie-breaker game, Praggnanandhaa lost with white pieces in the second, when he needed at least a draw. However, second seed Arjun Erigaisi and P. Harikrishna have ensured there will be enough Indian presence in the tournament despite the farewells from Praggnanandhaa, and before him, top seed D. Gukesh.

Praggnanandhaa wasn't the only big seed to fall on this day. Nor was Dubov the only Russian to prevail. Sixth-seeded Vincent Keymer of Germany and the 11th-seeded Frenchman Maxime Vachier-Lagrave were ousted by Andrey Esipenko and Aleksey Grebnev, respectively. —*PTI*

Regaining rhythm important for Kohli, Rohit as 2027 WC nears: Pujara

NEW DELHI, 13 NOV

Former India batter Cheteshwar Pujara on Thursday stressed that every bilateral assignment will be "very important" now for stalwarts Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma as India look ahead to the 2027 ODI World Cup.

In the twilight of their international career, Kohli and Rohit play just the ODI format, making it challenging to sustain form after long breaks.

The duo, who featured in the ODI series in Australia, will be seen in the upcoming series against South Africa starting November 30 in Ranchi. "For both of them, I think every series will be essential because when you are just playing one format. It is important for a player to be in touch with the game, and they will be playing after a bit of a break, which makes it a little more challenging," JioStar expert Pujara said during a Media Day ahead of the first Test against South Africa. —*PTI*

TRACK TO OPEN LA OLYMPICS; WOMEN'S 100M SPRINTERS LINE UP 3 TIMES A DAY

LOS ANGELES, 13 NOV

Sprinters normally run a maximum of two races in a day at a major event. It's a change the men will not have to deal with, but that's a woman's field that could include the last two world champions, Sha'Carri Richardson and Melissa Jefferson-Wooden

It will be a busy opening day of action at the Los Angeles Olympics for the world's fastest women. As part of a seismic schedule change for the 2028 Games, track and field, and not swimming, will lead off the Olympics. In releasing the detailed schedule on Wednesday, organizers revealed that the first day at the LA Coliseum, July 15, will include all three rounds of the women's 100 meters.

Sprinters normally run a maximum of two races in a day at a major event. It's a change the men will not have to deal with, but that a woman's field that could include the last two world champions, Sha'Carri Richardson and Melissa Jefferson-Wooden, and Olympic champ Julien Alfred, is being given nearly three years to prepare for.

"To be the pre-eminent event on the first night of competition in the historic LA Memorial Coliseum, I think when we presented it to the athletes that way, there was excitement," said Janet Evans, the gold-medal swimmer serving as chief athlete officer for the Los Angeles Games. A majority of athletes said to me, 'Just let me know. Let me know early, and I'll start training to run three 100s in one day.—*PTI*

BILLIE JEAN KING CUP

Indian tennis team looks to bag qualifier's berth

BENGALURU, 13 NOV

India took a giant leap in the 2020-21 Billie Jean King Cup, when it made a maiden sojourn to the playoff round before Latvia, led by grand slam champion Jelena Ostapenko and top-50 player Anastasija Sevastova, put an end to the dream run.

It now has another chance to break new ground, with the latest edition of the Billie Jean King Cup playoffs commencing at the S.M. Krishna Tennis Stadium here on Friday. The whole nation is still riding high on the Indian women's cricket team's maiden World Cup triumph recently, and it will be a further fillip if tennis stars can progress to the 2026 qualifiers.India is in Group G along with the Netherlands and Slovenia, and their campaign will be led by Sahaja Yamalapalli, Shrivalli Bhamidipati, Ankita Raina, Riya Bhatia, and Prarthana Thombare. The Netherlands and Slovenia will open the proceedings on Friday. India's first clash will be against Slovenia on Saturday, followed by the match-up against the seventh-seeded Dutch team on Sunday. This is the first time India is hosting the prestigious competition, and the three teams will face each other in round-robin matches. The group winner will progress to the 2026 Qualifiers, while the remaining two teams will return to the Regional Group I events.

India, led by Vishal Uppal, will be looking to put up a strong showing in Bengaluru
PHOTO: PTI

India previously reached the Billie Jean King Cup play-offs, formerly known as the Federation Cup, only once in 2021, when they lost 1-3 to Latvia in an away tie.

India's hopes of rewriting history rely on the impressive Sahaja. —*PTI*

Tennis star Sumit Nagal says denied China visa

BEIJING, 13 NOV

The Chinese Foreign Ministry on Thursday said India's top-ranked tennis player Sumit Nagal, who was denied a visa to travel to the country for a tournament, should submit his application to their Embassy with all required documents.

Nagal was scheduled to travel to Chengdu to compete in the Australian Open Playoff event, which will give the regional players a main-draw entry into the 2026 Australian Open.

On Tuesday, Nagal wrote on X that his visa was rejected without reason, and he sought the help of the Chinese Ambassador to India.

Asked for a response, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said China issues visas to athletes from all countries, including India, in accordance with laws and regulations. He expressed hope that the individual concerned would submit application materials in line with the requirements of the Chinese Embassy in India in a timely manner. The 27-year-old from Jhajjar, Haryana, is currently India's highest-ranked singles player, placed 275 in the latest ATP standings. —*PTI*